“The living bond of generations”

The narrative construction of post-dictatorial memories in Argentina and Chile

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ERKLÄRUNG

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorgelegte Arbeit „The living bond of generations: The narrative construction of post-dictatorial memories in Argentina and Chile“ selbständig verfasst habe. Andere als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel habe ich nicht verwendet. Die Arbeit ist in keinem früheren Promotionsverfahren angenommen oder abgelehnt worden und wird zur Veröffentlichung eingereicht.

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Raimundo Frei

Table of Contents

Chapter 7

Index of figures, tables, and images

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Introduction

On historical distance and temporal boundaries in Argentina and Chile

> "A time will come when, looking about me, I will recognize only very few who lived and thought as I did before the War. A time will come when I will understand, as I have sometimes uneasily, that new generations have pushed ahead of my own, that a society whose aspirations and customs are quite foreign to me has taken the place of the one to which I was most intimately attached (…) Depending on age and also circumstance, however, we are especially struck either by the differences between generations, as each retires into its own shell and grows distant from the other, or by the similarities, as they come together again and become as one."
>
> *The living bond of generations* (Halbwachs 1966 [1950]: 68)

Maurice Halbwachs' portrait of 'the living bond of generations' is a keen observation which provides the frame for the following doctoral investigation. My research asks how people locate themselves in historical time, how they imagine the differences and closeness between generations through narratives which switch according to 'age and also circumstance'. Against the background of these questions, I focus on Argentina and Chile thirty years after the end of their dictatorial regimes. I inquire, as Halbwachs did, under what circumstances Argentineans and Chileans narrate themselves as 'struck by differences' between generations or as 'coming together and becoming as one' through inter-generational bonds.

Formulated in a general way, my first research question is thus: what effect does historical distance have on these narrations. I am particularly interested in examining the effects of historical distance on generational memories following the transition from Latin American right-wing dictatorships. In both countries, furthermore, political youth activism has notably evolved in the last decade. Yet, while in the Argentine case, young political activism is narrated from an inter-generational standpoint, Chilean student protests are framed as generational breaking. Why? Why do narratives of generational continuity or breaking emerge in the course of these processes of youth politicization?

To answer this question, I propose to look at generational dynamics in Southern Cone post-dictatorial societies. My underlying theoretical assumption is that generations are deeply informed by narrative structures or, more essentially, generations might be understood as 'narrative identities' (Ricoeur 1991a, Somers 1994). Based on the recent focus on narratives and codes in cultural sociology (Alexander and Smith 2010), I will explain the extent to which *difficult pasts* are polluted, recovered and mythicized within a variety of modes of narration, thereby facilitating the emergence of generational stories as symbols of continuity or breaking.

Historical Distance and Difficult Pasts

The idea of *historical distance* vis-à-vis *difficult pasts* is a basic starting point of my research. Let me firstly introduce both notions.

Temporal distance is the raw material of remembering. The very act of recalling requires us to take distance from past events. Yet, historical distance might be relative. What remains close or far away depends on the construction of temporal boundaries. It is said that we live under the effects of the capitalist revolution and that the world before capitalism disappeared. It is said, rather conversely, that the world after the fall of the Berlin Wall is entirely different. Temporal boundaries – what belongs to 'before' and what comes 'after' – is a social construction and thus "to observe the social 'marking' of the past, we need to examine *social time lines* constructed by entire mnemonic communities" (Zerubavel 2003: 28).

Let me return to Halbwachs' narration for another, micro-level example of the construction of temporal boundaries. Halbwachs recount his life story in the following terms: "I became aware of the world about a decade after the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. The Second Empire was a distant period corresponding to a society almost extinct (…) I suppose that, for my children, the pre-1914 society of which they know nothing recedes similarly into a past not reached by their memory" (1966 [1950]: 67–68). Halbwachs was born in Reims, in 1877, yet he frames his memories ten *years* after the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. Coming of age during the Third Republic in France, the world *before* World War One already seemed to be incomprehensible for their children. As a disciple of Henri Bergson and Emile

Durkheim, Halbwachs viewed even distant pasts as ever-present in and through 'islands of the past': books, engravings, paintings, portraits in "family museums" (1966 [1950]: 65), as well as people's appearance, places and "unconscious ways of thinking and feeling preserved by certain persons and milieus" (1966 [1950]: 66). Again, historical distance is part and parcel of this interplay between past and present; as Halbwachs claims: "we may have to go some distance to discover those islands of the past so genuine in their preservations as to make us feel as though we have suddenly been carried back fifty or sixty years ago" (ibid.).

A woeful irony of the 'history of memory' is that Halbwachs died in the concentration camp *Buchenwald*, that is, this pioneer of collective memory studies died in what later became socially constructed as the Holocaust (Alexander 2002). The latter opened up a new dimension for Halbwachs' project of understanding the 'social frameworks of memory' as the 'living bond' became a traumatic one, a burden for the survivors and, to a certain extent, the descendants of the perpetrators. The twentieth century left behind both a myriad of these hideous 'transnational' events (from Armenian to Rwanda genocides) as well as contentious processes of meaning attribution to those traumatic circumstances. These events are 'difficult pasts' (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991) which are "constituted as a result of an inherent moral trauma, disputes, tensions and conflicts" (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2009: 3).

After the Holocaust, in the so-called era of the 'politics of regret' (Olick 2007), historical distance brings neither public forgetting nor consensual remembering. *Difficult pasts* returned frequently during last decades via commemorations and public disputes. Pennebaker and Banasik (1997) have even attempted to generalize a (modern) cycle of collective remembering, taking place 20 to 30 years after traumatic collective experiences. They argue that to memorialize difficult pasts requires psychological distance in order to elaborate the pain. Moreover, they connect the emergence of mnemonic artefacts (e.g. monuments, books, movies) to two generational hypotheses. The first one – the critical period hypothesis – states that "events that occur between ages of 12 and 25 should be some of the most long lasting and significant of a person's life" (1997: 14). The second hypothesis – the generational resource hypothesis – implies that those affected by traumatic experiences in their critical years will only have enough resources twenty or thirty years later to erect monuments, finance documentary films, or write books about it.

At first sight, the Argentinean and Chilean experiences should provide sufficient material to reject the second hypothesis (Robben 2005a made this point). The first years following the two dictatorships (which took place between 1976 and 1983 in Argentina and between 1973 and 1990 in Chile) were in fact periods of intense public debates, human rights commissions, trials, the building of monuments, the writing of books as well as mnemonic activities led by human rights organizations and the first democratic governments.

In both cases, these recent pasts were encapsulated as a matter of difficult commemorations. September 11, 1973 in Chile and March 24, 1976 in Argentina conveyed disputes and conflicts as the two countries were sharply divided amongst adherents and opponents of the old regime. Framed by the Cold War narrative, adherents viewed the military regimes as having restored social order and rescued 'them' from 'chaotic and violent communists' or 'violent leftist guerrillas'. For the opponents, those seven years in Argentina and seventeen years in Chile evoke experiences of clandestine crimes, torture, curfews and exile. In-between, a large section of the population was frozen by fear or remained indifferent to political issues. While Argentina's military regime eroded after losing the Malvinas/Falklands War in 1982, the Chilean dictatorship ended with a keenly contested plebiscite in 1988. Both endings initially provoked different paths: a search for 'truth and justice' in Argentina in the context of the defeat of the armed forces in the Malvinas/Falklands War; attempts at 'truth and reconciliation' in Chile under the weight of military veto powers.

Nevertheless, both countries experienced sort of 'public silences' during the nineties as a result of the weight of military forces that blocked processes of pursuing justice. It has been common to describe this period as being characterized by public forgetting (particularly in Chile, Hite 2007), although new testimonies, commemorations and trials never ceased to exist (particularly in Argentina, Barahona de Brito 2001). Even so, over the last decade – at least from 2003 onwards – a strong public memorialization has taken place in both countries and thus social frameworks of memory have gradually shifted, consolidating an image of the past as a (trans)national tragedy with regard to systematic violations of human rights (Jelin 2010: 62–72, Stern 2010:373–383).

Both countries have definitively experienced contested processes of coming to terms with their dictatorial pasts. These pasts stand for contemporaneous Chile and Argentina's difficult pasts. In 2013, the fortieth anniversary of the coup d'état was vividly commemorated in Chile; and in 2016, Argentina commemorated an equivalent anniversary. After 25 to 30 years of democracy, I propose, shifts in the collective memory can be also examined by focusing on the 'withdrawal' and 'emergence' of old and new generations.

A Generational Cycle

As a matter of fact, the aforementioned Pennebaker and Banasik's assumptions were not only describing an alleged cycle of memory. They were also drawing on a classical understanding of generational cycles. This is a timely moment to link Halbwachs' reflection on the generational bond with another sociologist, this time the pioneer of generational studies.

Three years after Halbwachs published *'Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire'* (1925), Karl Mannheim released his well-known essay *'Das Problem der Generationen'* (1928). In this essay, Mannheim raises five fundamental points in relation to a cycle of generations: a) the continuous emergence of new participants in society; b) the withdrawal of old participants; c) the limited temporal scope of history in which every generation participates; d) the necessity to transmit cultural heritage; and e) the uninterrupted feature of this cycle. The 'withdrawal' of old participants and the transmission of cultural heritage point back to the effects of historical distance. Yet Mannheim was more interested in recognizing when crucial historical experiences lead to 'fresh visions' and how new cultural patterns, carried by young social groups, provoke social change. Drawing on Dilthey's notion of the most 'impressionable years' (*Jahre der größten Aufnahmebereitschaft)*, Mannheim identified the age of around 17 as crucial – that is, in the middle of Pennebackers and Banasik's notion of 'critical years'. For Mannheim, the generational cycle might be renovated by new 'acquired memories' in periods of youth. These new experiences are also embedded in 'appropriated memories' transmitted by old participants. In such cycles, old and new stories intersect continuously.

Mannheim's cycle of generations is easily visible in Chile and Argentina. The 'withdrawal' of old participants goes together with the contesting transmission of heritage and, ultimately, with the emergence of new participants, which takes the form of youth political activism. Indeed, whereas the historical distance to dictatorships as difficult pasts is my first starting point, the second is the recognition of some sort of Mannheimian 'cycle of generations' in both countries.

Some deaths stand for the end of a turbulent period. Augusto Pinochet's (1915–2006) contentious funeral, or conversely, the death of ex-dictator Jorge Videla (1925–2013) in jail, along with the deaths of ex-President Raúl Alfonsín (1927–2009) and the former wife of Salvador Allende, Hortensia Bussi (1914–2009), mark the end of those political protagonists born in the first quarter of the last century. Obviously, this is not only about political elites but a whole age cohort that faded away and whose personal memories will be forgotten. Their memories might be replaced by 'histories' and cultural heritage, in books, engravings, images, icons and places.

On the other hand, since the beginning of the new millennium, a long sequence of youth political activation has taken place. It has been referred to as 'the return of militancy' in Argentina (Natanson 2012, Svampa 2011), and the cycle of student protests in Chile (S. Donoso 2013b, Ruiz Encina 2013). This idea of a 'return' is paradigmatic of a cultural understanding of Argentine politics as a cyclical movement. This particular political activation is linked to the period of a new government coalition, led by Néstor Kirchner and his wife Cristina Fernández. Tellingly, the former stimulated a powerful memory of the dictatorship. Furthermore, during their two presidencies, the ever-lasting political constellation of Peronism was revived as a triumphal political point of reference. A new Peronist youth, supporting government strategies, is closely tied to these turning points. By contrast, the Chilean cycle of student protests is a traditional civil society protest against how the state controls and manages the education system. The protest has grown and by now includes criticism of the model of democracy inherited from the dictatorship. A great part of those people actively participating in Chile and Argentina in political and student organizations were born after the dictatorships.[1]

[1] The history of the twentieth century offers a similar constellation when, 23 years after the end of the Second World War, a wave of student protests erupted in France and Germany, amongst others countries (N. Frei 2008, Von der Goltz 2011).

Hence this thesis aims to understand the extent to which these generational dynamics are informed by collective processes of remembering and narrating the past. Nonetheless, I will neither support mechanist theses of cycles nor an understanding which rests on a simple cause-effect relation between historical distance and generational renewal. I will rather offer a theoretical understanding based on empirical research into how stories about the past circulate in, and affect, present contexts, thereby drawing temporal boundaries between 'before and after' and opening up different horizons of expectation.

In order to do so, I am going to intertwine biographical, generational and public memories of people born *after* the most violent periods of the Argentinean and Chilean dictatorships via structural narrative analysis. Furthermore, I will keep some distance from an exclusive focus on elites and political units, as currently seen in the literature on generations (e.g. Fietze 2009, Hite 2000, Muñoz 2011). My research is mainly based on 'ordinary' life stories of, first, adult people born between 1965 and 1974, and, second, young people born between 1986 and 1994, which I collected in 2012 and 2013. Those two age-cohorts – coming of age during the eighties and two thousands – might be framed as those who do *not* have biographical memories of the hideous years of dictatorship (1973-1978), or, even if they spent part of their childhood and adolescence under dictatorship, they cannot appropriate the difficult past in the same way their parents do. Put differently, both generational locations are marked by the return to democracy, symbolically framed by different attempts to settle accounts with difficult pasts, by a period of boom in consumerism and neoliberal orders, as well as economic crises during the nineties, and last but not least, the recent political engagement of youth.[2] In order to justify these age periods and the use of life stories of 'ordinary' people, I turn to present-day literature on the Southern Cone's difficult pasts.

[2] Let me also state clearly that my thesis is neither about 'political activists' nor framed by the 'sociology of youth'. Even recognizing the value of some of the Latin American literature on youth (Dávila et. al 2006, Margulis 1996, Reguillo 2000, Zarzuri and Ganter 2005), I am interested in generational relationships as a site of memory and narrative rather than in particularizing youth cultures (cf. Leccardi and Feixa 2011).

The literature on memory in the Southern Cone

This research is about historical 'subjectivity', understood in the restricted sense given by Alessandro Portelli as the "study of the cultural forms and processes by which individuals express their sense of themselves in history" (1991: IX). Hence my research departs from a tradition of memory studies which looks at knowledge, values and beliefs transmitted or inherited from/about the dictatorship (or from/about the struggle against it) to younger generations. It is a different way of studying how people locate themselves in historical times and what roles different pasts play as moral and temporal boundaries. This approach reacts to what I observe as a significant research gap in the Southern Cone literature on memory. The gap is mainly one concerning qualitative comparative studies of 'ordinary stories', which do not only look at 'traumatic' experiences related to the dictatorships. Let me briefly map out three routes within this vast scholarly field in order to make evident such a gap.

I) One route within Latin American memory studies stems from how to comprehend authoritarian regimes. This is the path opened up by political scientists, in particular by Guillermo O'Donnell and his concept of the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State (1982). This literature is enormous and offers well-developed explanatory mechanisms (e.g. Cavarozzi 1983, Collier 1979, M.A. Garretón 1983). Comparative research on transitions from dictatorship to democracies also results in thorough examinations (e.g. Linz and Stepan 1996, O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). More recent comprehensive analyses have shed light on their underlying economic and political transformations (e.g. Huneeus 2000, for the Chilean dictatorship) along cultural and social dimensions (e.g. Novaro and Palermo 2003 for the case of Argentina).

On the same route but closer to the field of memory studies, a vast amount of literature deals with transitional justice (e.g. Acuña and Smulovitz 1995, Acuña 2006, Aguilar 2007, Elster 2006). These works focus on the dynamics of conflict among democratic governments, human rights organizations and military groups. The literature on human rights organizations has been extensively developed (e.g. Jelin 1994, Sikkink 1996). Military discourse – strategic processes of blocking and confessions – receives innovative, lucid attention (Hershberg and Agüero 2005,

Payne 2000, 2008). Recently, political generations – protagonists of the seventies generation – have increasingly been investigated by political scientists (Calveiro 2006, Hite 2000) and historians (Carnovale 2011, Moyano 2009, Valdivia et al. 2006, 2008).

By the same token, there have been efforts to systematize comparative politics of the past as *'Vergangenheitspolitik'* (Fuchs 2010, Fuchs and Nolte 2006, Straßner 2007), 'authoritarian legacies' (Hite and Cesarini 2004), 'legacies of human rights violations' (Roniger and Sznajder 1999), 'politics of memory' (Barahona de Brito et al. 2001, Jelin 1994), 'public memorialization' (Jelin 2007) and 'public policies of truth and memory' (F. Garretón et al. 2011). Recently, the comparative focus has shifted to 'transnational justice' (Roht-Arriaza 2006, Sikkink and Booth Willing 2006, 2007) or 'post-transitional justice' (Collins 2010).

The aforementioned, mostly political-science literature, also examines diverse initiatives aiming to come to terms with dictatorships. There has been a myriad of research on the symbolic effects produced by the first trials in Argentina (e.g. Feld 2002, González Bombal 1995, Nino 1996), truth commissions and their reports (e.g. Crenzel 2008, Marchesi 2001), commemorations (e.g. Candina 2002, Del Valle et al. 2013, Lorenz 2002, Ríos 2003), memorials or sites of memory (e.g. Aguilera et al. 2007, Collins and Hite 2013, Druliolle 2011) and modes of transmitting the past in schools (González 2012, Lorenz 2004, Reyes Jedlicki 2004). By analyzing modes of representation, these works paved the way for an exceptional group of essays – national and historical oriented – about conflicts and the dynamics of social memories (e.g. in Argentina, Lvovich and Bisquert 2008, Palermo 2004, Sarlo 2005, Vezzetti 2002, 2009; e.g. in Chile, M.A. Garretón 2003, Güell and Lechner 2006, Richard 2000, Loveman and Lira 1999, 2000, 2005, Wilde 1999; Winn 1997).

However, a great part of this literature adopts a top-down perspective, or at least narrows down the discussion to the political sphere. In addition, these studies mainly focus on "major corporative groups" (Carassai 2014: 5–6), e.g. human rights organizations, political parties, economic elites and military forces, as well as the role of the church and the media. This situation might represent a recurrent pitfall of memory studies when too little attention is paid to the 'reception' of public discourses (Kansteiner 2002). This is why different authors encourage to 'bring people back' to collective memory studies (Schwartz and Schuman 2009). In other

terms, this strand of literature is uncertain concerning how 'ordinary' citizens remember or deal with all these processes of public memoralization.

II) A second route may thus take the opposite avenue, adopting a 'bottom-up' strategy. Yet, both routes run in parallel and adopt complementary research positions. Indeed, some authors take both routes, e.g. Guillermo O'Donnell. He provides inaugural reflections on 'the harvest of fear' (1983a), trying to develop hypotheses regarding the legacy of authoritarian control at the level of micro-narratives (1983b). He might thus have unleashed substantial research on 'cultures of fear' (e.g. Constable and Valenzuela 2001, Corradi et al. 1992, Lira and Castillo 1991).

Since then, researchers have started to investigate how people from different age cohorts remember or appropriate these difficult pasts. In Argentina, Jelin and Kaufman (2000) provide a brilliant qualitative study on how "traces and marks of the past emerge in the development of the life course and in everyday experiences of people" (2000: 89–90). Bietti (2010, 2012) has offered valuable theoretical insights into memory dynamics based on focus groups with Argentine families. In Chile, social psychologists took a similar stance, although stressing the political frameworks of individuals' representations of the past (Manzi et al. 2004). In addition, through quantitative surveys, Huneeus (2003) explores some shifts within Chilean political positions, while Carvacho et al. (2013) and Guichard and Henríquez (2001) show the distribution of historical events among generational memories (for Argentina see also, Oddone and Lynch 2008).

Drawing on the notion of 'post-memory' (Hirsch 1997), Susana Kaiser (2005) interviewed young 'average' Argentine people who came of age during the nineties, evidencing different 'mnemonic communities' of transmission and knowledge about state terrorism and human rights violations – the 'post memories of terror'. In recent times too, innovative qualitative research has been conducted on how new Chilean generations narrate, appropriate or modify memories of dictatorship (e.g. Arnoso 2012, Cornejo et al. 2013, Espinosa et al. 2013, Piper et al. 2013, Reyes 2007, 2009).

One of the critical points this literature suffers from is the lack of transnational research. There is no comparative literature using the same qualitative methodology for studying cross-national contexts, beyond organized groups or case studies (e.g. Payne 2000 on uncivil movements). Even the most important comparative project on

collective memory coordinated by Jelin, Hershberg and Degregori (12 volumes of 'memories of the repression') encompasses exclusively national case studies. This is also true for two of the most important scholars in the field who mixed documentary, ethnographic, historical, quantitative and qualitative studies, studying the developments from Perón to the transition (Robben 2005a, 2005b, 2012), from Allende's government to Bachelet's (Stern 2004, 2006, 2010).

III) A third route of research concentrates on the experiences of survivors as well as the relatives of victims. At the very beginning, this was a reaction to the relentless refusal of military forces to recognize human rights violations. From different disciplines, researchers started to collect testimonies and build archives and local histories in order to reconstruct a neglected history. Testimonies and archives were indeed the bedrock of human rights commissions in the first years of the transitions. Furthermore, the figure of missing people (*desaparecidos*), as well as kidnapped children (particularly in Argentina), fosters traumatic experiences to do with doubts about lives and deaths. Trauma has been the keyword for understanding horrible experiences of torture, the loss of relatives and historical violence (e.g. Edelman and Kordon 1995, Reszcynski 1991, Weinstein 1987).

The recollection of testimonies paves the way for a large tradition of oral history on violence. This is the case for research into those localities, communities or neighbourhoods particularly affected (e.g. Barrientos 2003, Da Silva Catela 2003, Gárces and Leiva 2005, Moya et al 2005). In Argentina, different works opened up the 'lexicon of terror' (Feitlowitz 1998) via textual analyses of the period and interviews with ex-prisoners and survivors of torture. Calveiro (2004) described experiences in Argentine centres of torture as like those in 'concentration camps'.

In a similar vein, a group of scholars investigated the intertwining of family and politics (Bonaldi 2006, Da Silva Catela 2001, Filc 1997, Taylor 2002). The focus on families' frames of some human rights organizations (driven by grandmothers, mothers, daughters and sons of the *desaparecidos*) has introduced an increasingly psychoanalytical, genealogical vocabulary to the field (e.g. Kaufman 2006, Oberti 2006). 'Acting out' and 'going through' became master frames of Southern Cone memory studies (Jelin 2003, Robben 2005b). Other recent works on Chile offer insights into the 'second generation' when looking at the 'transference of fear' and 'haunting memories' (D. Jara 2012, 2016). Other such as Faúndez et al. (2014) have

investigated the 'third generation' by examining appropriation of political imprisonment stories in grandchildren of former political prisoners. Likewise, Serpente (2011) analyzed memories of second-generation Chileans and Argentineans living in Great Britain (due to exile or migration). Serpente attempts to leave behind the 'family frame' of human rights organizations, yet he sticks to the toolkit of 'post-memory' (Hirsch 1997).

Ultimately, an immense amount of research has emerged concerning cultural artefacts such as novels, photography, documentary films and theatre plays. Werth (2010) reflects on "post-dictatorial memories" in recent Argentine theatre plays and Sosa shows the breaking of the family frame (the 'wounded family') through 'queer' novels (Sosa 2011a, 2011b). Those works are informed by different forms of intergenerational transmission of traumatic experiences (even in 'non-normative lineages', as Sosa [2012a] claims for innovative theatre plays). Gómez-Barris (2009) offers an informed analysis of Chilean sites of memory, documentary films, paintings and performances of exiles communities within the field of 'memory symbolics'. Even if she attempts to avoid the vocabulary of 'collective trauma', her focus remains on "those who have been tortured, those disappeared and their relatives, and those forced into exile" (2009: 28). Ultimately, Ros (2012) examines the 'post-dictatorship generation' in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay through different cultural artefacts (cinema, novels, photographs), making evident new interpretative frames in young people's cultural production.

Similar to the political science literature, these examinations of cultural artefacts, however, have said hardly anything about the impact on 'audiences'. Indeed, many of the oeuvres analyzed by those authors are only taken up by particular groups or intellectuals a priori interested in human rights.

Furthermore, the extensive use of trauma terminology in this literature entails some risks. There is no doubt that psychological approaches to trauma were essential for dealing with ex-prisoners, victims of torture and relatives of *desaparecidos*. However, different authors adopt a metonymic vocabulary (pars pro toto) in which the entire society emerges as traumatized (e.g. Robben 2005a, 2005b). This is hardly the case when broad sections of the population were either indifferent to or even satisfied with the military regimes. Jeffrey Alexander has suggested that Latin American scholars have been largely informed by a psychoanalytical-oriented lay trauma

theory (2003: 89). Alexander proposes a different way of understanding difficult pasts, as a "social process of cultural trauma". But even this formulation of 'cultural trauma' has been criticized as blurring the distinction between individual and societal structures (Joas 2005, Kansteiner and Weilnböck 2010).

Even if it is necessary to use psychological metaphors (e.g. collective memory), and recognizing the breaking point involved in authoritarian, dictatorial experiences as difficult pasts, 'trauma' vocabulary sometimes hampers sociological differentiation. A great part of what is nowadays called 'memory studies' in the Southern Cone literature is almost automatically equated with research into 'human rights crimes' or studies on 'state terrorism'. By contrast, I suggest that in order to take seriously the post-dictatorial memories of people who grew up after these difficult pasts, we need to look at different sorts of events, those scarcely regarded as subjects of memory studies by Southern Cone research as they are not associated with the dictatorships. I am referring here to memories of the hyperinflation or economic crisis, stories about social movements and youth participation, narrations of technological change, or older memories about rural and overseas migration. By listening to and examining these stories, cultural forms of narration and repertories of evaluation can be uncovered, thereby enabling an understanding of where and how people locate themselves historically and how they appropriate (or not) difficult pasts.

I therefore aim to 'bring the people back' by recollecting ordinary citizens' narratives. This is a line opened up by different authors in the Southern Cone literature, but it has been done so largely within exclusively national research designs. Inspired by comparative studies on moral boundaries in United States and France (Lamont 1992, 2000), family memories in Germany and Israel (Rosenthal 1997) and vernacular memories in Germany and Poland (Breuer 2014), I will offer a comparative research of modes of narration in Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile based on 60 interviews among different social classes. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first investigation using this methodology in the Southern Cone[3].

[3] Similar, but not identical, Payne (2000) researched military groups' narrations in Argentina, Brazil and Nicaragua; Grimson (2007) gathered a range of scholars investigating Brazilian and Argentinean national symbols, though with all of them drawing on elite interviews. Undurraga (2014) interviewed elites in Chile and Argentina; Serpente (2011) studied Argentinean and Chilean diaspora in the UK; the PNUD 2010 report on youth in four countries draws on different methodological strategies, this being a great exception.

Finally, instead of asking about 'knowledge of dictatorships' or the 'intergenerational transmission of trauma', I will expand the focus to generational memories and narratives of multiple events. Thus, my general questions can be divided into three more specific ones:

- How and when do 'ordinary' people who grew up during the 1980s and 2000s in Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile narrate and connect their biographies to collective experiences?

- How do narratives of the past (in particular of right-wing dictatorships) foster, recover or hamper 'temporal boundaries'?

- Why and how are life stories entangled in generational narratives of continuity/breaking?

The park and the theatre

Before closing this introduction by providing an outline of this thesis, let me take a step back and offer two personal experiences that exemplify how narratives of continuity and breaking circulate in Argentina and Chile. Both incidents occurred while I was conducting my interviews in the two countries; the first one happened at an important memory site in Buenos Aires, whilst the second one was observed at a theatre festival in Santiago.

When finalizing my months of 'fieldwork' in Argentina, I decided to visit the "Parque de la Memoria". Inaugurated in 2007, the place is located on the riverside of Rio de la Plata, where those kidnapped by military forces were thrown into the sea in the so-called 'flights of death'. The memorial wall cutting through the place, as Druliolle (2011: 28-29) points out, resembles the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington with its list of names, as well as the Jewish Museum in Berlin given its zigzag, broken design. The wall contains 30,000 spaces for names, albeit only a third of them are used. The number of 30,000 was the symbolic cipher used by victimizers and victims to encapsulate either the magnitude of the 'war against subversion' or the scale of the national disaster caused by the state terrorism, respectively.

Nevertheless, to be honest, my pretension at comparability is limited to metropolitan regions (see Chapter 2), thus losing important regional differences.

However, in contrast to the models in Washington and Berlin, it is difficult to access the place; this site is far from the centre of Buenos Aires and, personally speaking, seems somehow deserted.

But what really struck me was the conversation of two boys, about twelve years old, when approaching the memorial wall. 'What are all these names about?' asked one of them. The second one, very confidently replied, "They might be Malvinas' boys", referring to the fallen soldiers of the Malvinas/Falklands War. Then and now I ask myself: how is it possible that a boy of twelve years, looking at names engraved on a wall, thinks instantly of "Malvinas' boys"? In other terms: what is the national image of victims transmitted in family conversations, schools and streets in Argentina? Ironically, the boy's claim seemed to be a symbolic triumph of the military forces in their attempt to legitimize their dictatorship via the attack on the islands. After a while, one of the fathers came and was interrogated about the names. The boys wanted to know if they were indeed fallen Malvinas soldiers. An astonished father answered, "Of course, not, they are the victims of the dictatorship." Then, the same boy said: "Ah, these are the boys of 'La Noche de los Lápices' (the night of the pencils)." So, my surprise was even greater when trying to figure out how 'La Noche de los Lápices' – a night in 1976 when ten young students from the city of La Plata were kidnapped by secret services and nine of them were murdered – stands for thousands of deaths. Is it the film about 'La Noche de los Lápices' broadcast in 1986, or the annual commemorations in schools and the streets, or maybe the image of youth struggling against the clandestine power which was behind such a guess?

The second experience took place when I was conducting my interviews in Chile. During January 2013, I had the opportunity to attend a theatre festival, 'Santiago a Mil'. On that occasion, there was a special programme for the fortieth commemoration of the coup d'état. Out of the seven plays performed, six had been staged within the previous two years. All of them were fascinating and outstanding, confirming the role of theatre as a privileged site of Argentine and Chilean cultural memory (Werth 2010). The first interesting aspect was the strong presence of generational topics in the plays. Even a spectacular, dramatic third version directed by Mora Miller of Ariel Dorfman's famous ´Death and the Maiden' seemed old-fashioned and outdated compared to the performance in 'Oratorio de la lluvia negra' (2012, Juan Radrigán, directed by Rodrigo Pérez) and in 'El año en que nací' (2012, Lola Arias).

This latter play, 'El año en que nací' (The year I was born), represents one of the most prominent mnemonic performances addressing generational memories. A group of eleven young people born between 1971 and 1989 reflect on their biographies and the contrasting destinies of their parents, involving the son of an extreme right-wing activist as well as the daughter of an assassinated member of a leftist organization. The setting evolves through images, sounds, photos, clothes, "islands of the past" and "family museums", as Halbwachs expressed. The play is documentary theatre, highly dynamic, lucid and touching. It is certainly framed by the opposition between right and left, yet there is a clear attempt to challenge such a division. At one point, one of the actors proposes forming a queue according to social class, and afterwards according to skin colour. The play starts in 1971 – the year in which the oldest actor was born – and includes images of student protests in the final part. I wonder why Chilean memory recurrently starts with the seventies (in opposition to the longer frame of Argentine memory that begins in the forties) and why narratives of the past now encompass student protests.

Tellingly, the director, Lola Arias, had directed a very similar play in Argentina four years earlier. 'Mi vida después' (My life after, 2008) was also a brilliant production with six professional actors reconstructing their parents' lives. Amongst the many differences between the two national plays, Lola Arias herself highlights the fact that, in Chile, actors acutely discussed the past, whereas in Argentina the moral judgement against the dictatorship was already resolved (in Sosa 2012b). There is a clear division indeed between the two countries. In one of them the ex-dictator died in jail, while the other one was buried surrounded by economic, political and military elites. A cultural comparison suggests that in Argentina the 'burden of history' can be discussed, imagined and modified as an intergenerational relationship. In Chile, the disputes and silence about the past evoke irresolvable older divisions. Still, this silence might also foster narratives of generational breaking. In one of the most powerful moments of the play 'El año en que nací', one of the Chilean actresses recounted that when researching about her unknown father for the play – she had only one picture – she was informed that he was a policeman, imprisoned in the southern jail of Temuco, due to having assassinated two leftist activists. A long communicative silence had prevailed in her family for all these years, but thanks to the play she could break it.

Thesis Outline

The following dissertation is divided into seven chapters. In the first one, I start by discussing Mannheim's essay 'The problem of generations' (1.1). Following Gabriele Rosenthal's (2000) reading, I explore two dimensions of generational building in Mannheim's essay. The first component – the diachronic dimension – points to the transmission of old stories to younger cohorts in family, school or public spaces. The second aspect – the synchronic dimension – alludes to generational bonds which emerge from particular historical experiences. In every 'generational site' (*Generationslagerung*) stories circulate about these experiences, coming from the 'formative or critical years'. When trying to link both dimensions, a particular puzzle of temporality ('transmission' vs 'fresh visions') emerges. In the second section (1.2), I seek to resolve this puzzle in the literature on generations (e.g. Hans Bude, Michael Corsten, June Edmunds, Ronald Eyerman, Pierre Nora, Howard Schuman, Bryan Turner).

In order to expand the notion of memory in contemporary generational studies, I introduce the concept of 'memory supports' (1.3). Emotions, communications and cultural artefacts will be understood as different kinds of support via which the past is transmitted, disputed and elaborated. Finally, drawing on narrative approaches in literature, history, psychology and sociology, I propose a theoretical linkage between the synchronic and diachronic components of generational building (1.4). Narratives are understood as temporal sequences – composed of beginnings, middles and ends – in which events and social meanings are connected. Narratives embed 'repertoires of evaluation' (Lamont and Thévenot 2002) in which are drawn temporal, social and moral boundaries. As Margaret Somers said, "people construct identities (however multiple and changing) by locating themselves or being located within a repertoire of emplotted stories" (Somers 1994: 23). By identifying collective modes of plotting events and social boundaries, projects of identity control (Harrison White 2008) and canonical narratives (Ben-Ze'ev and Lomsky-Feder 2009, Bruner 1991, Polletta 1998, 2002) are revealed to be key components of intergenerational dynamics.

In Chapter Two, I outline the methodological framework. I begin by offering some working hypotheses underlying the selection of the two age cohorts. Thereafter (Section 2.1) I introduce a specific mode of recollecting respondents' life-stories – a narrative experiment that I call 'remembering for the future' – in which interviewees

are invited to recount their stories to some future descendant. The interview is entirely open to recollecting private and public experiences and helps observing when biography and history are connected. Afterwards, I will specify the territorial scope of the research (metropolitan areas of Buenos Aires and Santiago) and justify the criteria for sampling (age, gender, social class). In the second section (2.2), I will provide the basis for a comprehensive step-by-step structural narrative analysis. I initially define processes of coding and matching. Next, I provide some basic elements of narrative (e.g. characters and settings) and linguistic (e.g. hyperbolization and metonyms) analysis. Finally, I define two macro narrative structures that inform the structural analysis, namely, templates and modes of emplotment.

In Chapters Three and Four I examine the generational memories of Argentine and Chilean people who grew up during the eighties. In the case of Argentina, the oldest stories – their historical boundaries – reach back to the death of Perón and the migration of the interviewees' grandparents. Subsequently, two plot lines are developed. In the first one, childhood experiences are described as a time of safety and order, which contrasts with the present time as a realm of insecurity and fear. Embedded in upper- and lower-class respondents, this nostalgic plotting provides temporal boundaries between the past as a time of respect, and the present as a time of insecurity. Interestingly, given the weight of a new state canonical narrative (Kichners' discourse), dictatorship (their childhood) is blocked as a time of order. Instead, the *nostalgic* mode of emplotment endows on the entire Argentine history a macro declining movement stemming from a mythical golden age.

By contrast, the second plot line put forward by a group of respondents (left, Peronist, middle class) narrated a silent and militarized childhood under dictatorship, including feelings of illusion and disillusion about the Malvinas/Falklands War and the recovery of democracy in adolescence. They were affected by the processes of public memorialization (the human rights report and the first trial against the military junta) and political activism during their youth. After the turning point of hyperinflation in 1989, as well as the processes of amnesty and pardons granted by president Menem, a sense of detachment and irony emerges in their stories. As a final evaluative component, the next decade ruled by the Kirchners is more optimistically narrated as a period of recovering their youthful feelings of

political engagement and processes of truth and justice. A *comic* mode of emplotment encapsulates this sense of 'happy ending'.

The Chilean 'adult' cohort is defined by a childhood and adolescence living under dictatorship. Stories started with their parents' migration from the countryside and Allende's government. Tellingly, even if political divisions are significant – left- and right-wing memories – extreme oppositions fade away and consensual attitudes concerning human rights crimes predominate. As a result, more subtle divergences remain when, for instance, narrating Allende's period as a time of scarcity and communism (polluted) or as a democratic socialist government (purified). Their stories bring back aspects of the economic crisis in 1981 and the massive protests of 1983–1986. Still, interviewees cannot locate themselves as participants of these historical moments, as they were too young. This provokes a particular difference between their stories (passive characters) and those participating (active agents) in such occasions.

Later, they remember being enchanted by the collective enthusiasm and public discussion of the plebiscite in 1988. For some of them, this was 'their' time for participating in student councils, enrolling in political parties and being recorded in the electoral register. It is precisely the plebiscite that draws a crucial 'before and after'. Henceforth, their templates are fully informed by the first attempt to settle accounts with the dictatorship and the first democratic government scripts. Yet, their stories report a gradual disillusionment with the promise of 'joy' raised by the recovery of democracy. After processes of blocking memorialization, they came into age hearing about a 'future-oriented narrative': leave the past behind and look towards the future. The feeling of disillusionment and detachment seems very similar to that of Argentine respondents, as well as the narration of street insecurity in upper and lower strata. National differences emerge again when a *consoling* mode of emplotment rises to dominance. Their present time is narrated as one full of consumerism, individualism and inequality, keeping at bay their golden years of participation. Their relief is found in their private lives, while no new collective illusion emerges offering a 'happy ending' as in the Argentine case.

In Chapters Five and Six, I turn to stories circulating in young generational sites. In the Argentine case, stories are delimited by the authoritarian period and hyperinflation of 1989. Young people located themselves particularly as born after

the last dictatorship and growing up in democracy. Their life stories are initially impacted upon by social turmoil when narrating the crisis of 2001 as a liminal experience. Their childhood during the nineties appears as an 'evil time' in which the crisis had its origin.

During their adolescence, Kirchner's politics of memory marked an important turning point for recalling family table conversations and school initiatives. Kirchner canonizes the seventies generation as heroic victims of the past (i.e. martyrs), adopting the discourse of human rights organizations. A decisive match takes place between the beginning of their adolescence and Kirchner's symbolic turn. Some of them started becoming involved in student councils, cultural organizations and political groups when the subject of memory spread via school initiatives and commemorations. Later, the increasing polarization between those pro and contra Kirchner's policies reaches its peak during the so-called 'farm crisis' – a national conflict about taxing soy products – in 2008. Those engaged in political or civil organizations had to take positions as their parents did. In addition, the frame of the farm crisis (people vs elites) returns to the vocabulary of the first wave of Peronism during the forties. All in all, the canonical narrative of Kirchner and the polarizing memory of Peronism endow a *cyclical plot*: either repeat the 'old' nightmares or continue the struggle for social justice. The generational 'we feeling' is weak, since the bond is rather with the 'past'.

Older cohorts and young Argentineans offer examples of inter-generational continuity. Narratives of generational breaking were scarcely visible. I argue that canonical narratives control identity and temporal boundaries within these generational sites. By contrast, in the Chilean young generational site, stories of disruption dominate.

Chapter Six begins by reporting the widespread practice of 'communicative silence' concerning the last dictatorship. This silence predominates due to fear of talking about the past amongst older groups, a cultural pattern of avoiding conflict, the generational argument that 'you were not there, you cannot understand', or the absence of justification in right-wing families. This does not imply a denial of human rights crimes, yet there are linguistic strategies of mitigation and Allende's government remained polluted.

When looking at their memories of childhood during the nineties, a story of technological development (from the first mobile phones to the Internet) prevails. Still, this story about technology increasingly appears polluted as it is linked to individualism. Eventually, it is said that 'our' generation was slumbered by technology and consumerism. This evaluation stems from the cycle of student protests from 2006 to 2011. These protests are narrated as a generational 'awakening'. From 2006 the catchphrase 'we, without fear any longer' circulates, drawing a temporal boundary, separating from older generations who have become paralyzed by authoritarian legacies. A *romantic* plot is thus developed, featuring the student protests. The plot contains heroes (students), villains (right-wing government), and false helpers (left-wing politicians). By representing themselves as the 'good' side of society, student protest narratives embed the moral code of civil society (Alexander 2006).

In contrast to Argentine narrative canonization, the Chilean case offers an example of the weakening of canonical narratives. This process started with the 30th commemoration of the coup d'état when the evaluative clause 'leave the past behind' shifted to a rhetoric of 'learning from the past' (Forchtner 2014). Later, the student movement defies this promise of a better future when stressing the problem of education quality and family debt, due to the market orientation of public education. Finally, narratives about the student protests seek to break down a temporal boundary between the past (dictatorship) and the present (democracy) by claiming continuity between the two. The students claim to facilitate this break since they are not polluted by fear.

In the final chapter, I bring these generational memories together and elaborate them in more analytical terms. By means of synchronic, diachronic and plotting mechanisms I summarize the three central arguments of the dissertation.

- *Generational narratives are nourished by emotional bonds and shared performances.*

In every generational site, stories circulate about what individuals regard as their 'own' time. Generational memories of triumphal and difficult events are the raw material of these stories (e.g. Malvinas/Falklands War, the plebiscite, economic crisis, student protests). As a matter of fact, when narrating collective events, people

concentrate more on their youth. As an effect of life course – a period characterized by the strengthening of horizontal networks of peers – people can share those events with their coevals. Nonetheless, the meanings of these events and periods are not frozen. New events unleash reinterpretations so that new narrative sequences emerge. These processes of meaning attribution are not only collectively framed, but also depend on a search for narrative coherence between past and present. At this synchronic level, events and meanings leave emotional bonds instead of some shared generational 'consciousness' or 'habitus'. This emotional aspect grows as soon as the story is narrated as 'themselves' being performed. This is why student movements as shared performances convey strong generational 'we feelings'. Ultimately, social segmentation plays an important role at this synchronic level when blocking processes of intersection between biography and collective events. In all cohorts I found evidence that upper-class groups tend to privatize memories and lower groups evoke more traumatic personal experiences of violence.

- *Generational boundaries depend on projects of identity control.*

People locate themselves in history as continuing or breaking traditions, depending on diachronic mechanisms of identity control. Family memories as stories of continuity, for instance, are based on mechanisms of loyalty. Stories transmitted via school or media normally reinforce national canonical narratives. In the case of Argentina, a strong canonical narrative stimulates stories of intergenerational continuity. In particular, the economic crisis of 2001 opened up a 'narrative conjecture' in which different difficult pasts ('political and economic genocides') are connected. The Chilean case is very different as the canonical progressive narrative (leave the past behind and look towards the future) was weakened over the last twenty years. The difficult past could not be left behind as struggles and commemorations regularly bring it back. The promise of a better future failed when the hope linked to social mobility via education was shattered by student protests.

- *Generations can be better grasped through comparative modes of plotting events and their codes.*

Nostalgic, comic, consoling, cyclical and romantic modes of plotting stories offer linking mechanisms between synchronic and diachronic generational dimensions. They are narrative structures which embed codes and plot lines, whereby past, present and future cohere. The *nostalgic plot* is a counter-reaction to the symbolical shifts unleashed by a new canonical narrative. The longing for social respect and order informs its declining plot line. The *comic plot* fosters the societal reintegration of past experiences with present expectations when people adopt the new canonical narrative. It is a progressive plot line in which the characters' credibility matters (recognizing wrongdoers). The *consoling plot* is an effect of the weakening of a canonical narrative. Without collective promise, individuals restrict their expectations to private lives ('the only real sphere'). The *cyclical plot* is brought about when the past is the base for understanding the present in canonical narratives. Rituals provide for sacred times and heroic figures. The *romantic plot* fosters a breaking with old traditions carried by villains and false helpers. The new generation stands for civil purity as it was born after dictatorships. All in all, the 'living bond of generations' varies as long as collective mode of narrations open, link and block temporal boundaries.

The thesis closes with a short conclusion in which I reflect upon these three macro explanations and their relation. I further identify some limitations of my research as well as pointing out future research questions which emerge in the course of my investigation.

Chapter 1

Generational building: the intertwining of memories and narratives

Temporality matters. Although time is a highly abstract notion, it is a basic experience for both individuals as well as social groups. As such, it is relevant to sociology as meaning emerges within temporal structures. Indeed, three crucial concepts of cultural sociology are linked to temporality: memory, narrative and generation.

Concerning the concept of memory, its main premise is linking temporal structures. Jan Assmann (1992) claims that every culture forms a 'connective structure' through which past and present are linked, creating a sense of belonging and identity. Accordingly, Olick et al. state that "memory – relating past and present – is thus the central faculty of being in time, through which we define individual and collective selves" (2011:37). By focusing on the ways in which the past is reconstructed in the present, memory studies illustrates these 'connective structures'.

Both the boom in memory studies (Winter 2001) and the narrative turn (Riessman 2008) are part of a wider, reemerging interest in culture and identity which has occurred over the last thirty years. The concept of narrative rests on the arrangement of elements, i.e. the emplotment of events into a temporal sequence: a beginning, a middle and an end. Hence narrative becomes "the principal way in which our species organizes its understanding of time" (P. Abbott 2002:3). Narrative studies reveal how these sequences enclose constellations of meaning such that individuals and groups construct identities (Somers 1994).

The concept of generation has increasingly drawn the attention of scholars as well. It is undoubtedly a temporal category (Bude 1997; Giesen 2004a). It is etymologically related to temporality through two different meanings (Parnes et al. 2008:10-11). On the one hand, generation (*generatio)* is associated to a temporal sequence of family relationships, i.e. a genealogy or lineage. This sequence is represented as a natural cycle: grandparents die and children are born. These new members support the biological continuity of the group. On the other hand, generation also means contemporaneity. The term here stems from '*genus*', signifying a group of people who have lived at the same time. In this sense, generation is related to 'age' and became an antique figure to indicate a period of

time (from generation to generation). The term 'cohort' – etymologically an ancient military unit or a band of people with a common interest – derives its modern demographic meaning from this idea of contemporaneity.

Both meanings of 'generation' have survived thus far. We talk about generations when referring to our forebears or to identify our coevals. Notwithstanding, the concept has changed fundamentally since the 18th century. As Koselleck explained (1979:360-369), modernity brought about a new semantic of social time. In peasant, traditional societies – as it were – the conception of time was based on the cycles of nature. Practical knowledge was handed down from generation to generation, reinforcing family and communal bonding. The experiences of ancestors were guidelines for what should be expected by their descendants. Furthermore, religious constellations – especially Christianity – fixed future expectations: the afterlife. The modern idea of 'progress' increasingly weakened this connection between the 'space of experience' and the 'horizon of expectations'. New experiences (e.g. new commercial routes, scientific discoveries, technological innovations) opened up different and allegedly better futures. Looking ahead, every generation could break away from the past and change its received heritage. As Nora pointed out: "The past is no longer the law: this is the very essence of the phenomenon" (Nora 1996 [1992]: 502). This seems to be the conclusion to be drawn about the French Revolution: a political generation creating a new historical horizon of expectations (Koselleck 1979:365-367; Parnes et al., 2008:97-109).

After the First World War, the concept of 'generation' became central in order to understand the course of history: people who grew up in the same period of time and shared processes of socialization during their youth – thereby developing strong social bonds – might become agents of social change. Hence generations were constituted as social formations, similar to social classes. It was primarily via the path-breaking essay of Mannheim, *The problem of generations* (1928), that this phenomenon became a sociological concern.

Since then, it has been possible to identify three troublesome aspects of the concept. First, the term has oscillated between its two etymological meanings: genealogy and contemporaneity. Those who use the concept of generation as 'genealogy' try to avoid or ignore the concept of generation as a social formation. The opposite is equally true. Research on historical or political generations departs from the

genealogical route. So far, the division has only led to conceptual puzzlement. The second track is problematic too. Generation has been used as a recurrent label to demarcate new identities. Since the 1990s, as Bohnenkamp underlines (2011:9), we recurrently observe the baptism of novel generations: Generation X, Y, 2000, Golf, Global, Facebook, Obama and so forth. Undoubtedly, the concept has the potential to become a buzzword (Kohli and Szydlich 2000:17).

Finally, and perhaps most strikingly, the classical notion of generations must be reviewed. The modern discussion of generations emerged within a wider progressive narrative in which – to use Koselleck's terms once more – the 'horizon of expectations' was disentangled from the 'space of experiences'. As a result, generations could break with the past and set historical precedents. However, after the modern sequence of 'difficult pasts' (the Holocaust, modern wars, genocides, dictatorships), various scholars have claimed that by the end of the twentieth century this progressive narrative had evolved into a tragic one (Alexander 2002), i.e. a shift "from present futures to present pasts" (Huyssen 2003:11). How does this post-modern temporality impinge on our understanding of generations?

A timely debate has taken place within cultural sociology and political history over the last twenty years on the concept of generation. Drawing upon and critiquing Mannheim's framework, theoretical discussion and empirical research have seen substantial advances and helped to clarify a fresh theory of generations. Not surprisingly, the two analytical categories which have helped the most to overcome the three aforementioned difficulties are 'memory' and 'narrative'. As I will show in the following sections, generations have thus been considered both as 'mnemonic communities' (*Erinnerungsgemeinschaft*) and 'narrative communities' (*Erzählgemeinschaft*). The central aim of this chapter is to understand how these three temporal concepts are intertwined.

Against this background, the chapter is divided into four sections. The first section introduces a theoretical problem by referring to Mannheim's inaugural essay. The second section describes some alternatives to resolve the problem as presented by recent literature on generations. The third section expands the concept of memory involved in generational research by introducing the notion of 'memory supports'. The final section proposes a sociological solution to the problem outlined, suggesting that generations should be understood as narrative constructions.

1.1 Puzzling Mannheim: revisiting *The Problem of Generations*

Modern attempts to analyse generations frequently start with Karl Mannheim's essay *Das Problem der Generationen* (1928). Manheim's essay is still a matter of interpretation, dispute and criticism. A recent assessment of his essay as 'male, elite and politically oriented' has, however, cast doubt on its theoretical value (see, for example, Von der Goltz 2011:15). Yet, the essay is still worth revisiting since Mannheim describes a unique puzzle of social temporality. From the very beginning I will suggest discarding the idea that this puzzle consists either of determining the point at which generations 'really' emerge or finding a 'proper rhythm of generations'.[4] Rather, this 'generational puzzle' might be best understood as a coalescence of two different temporal dimensions. On the one hand, the puzzle involves a diachronic dimension constituted by different forms of past transmission, or in other terms, the space of cultural heritage and historical memories transmitted from older generations to new generations in the family, school and public spheres. On the other hand, the puzzle contains a synchronic dimension formed by new principles of social construction. This latter dimension alludes to the impact of some collective events on how people narrate their pasts and imagine new futures. Both aspects are present in Mannheim's essay.[5] The 'puzzling' aspect appears not only when trying to connect both dimensions, but also in subsequent literature on memory and generations: as soon as one of these aspects is examined, the other dimension too often falls out of the frame. Briefly stated, some memory studies tend to ignore generations as social formations – fostering rather a genealogical understanding (family memories) – while generational studies often disregard the role of past transmission.

Needless to say, Mannheim's essay is difficult to interpret. First of all, the nature of the 'problem of generations' is not entirely clear. Mannheim does not explain the issue at the beginning. Instead, he starts distinguishing two ways of approaching the alleged problem (Mannheim [1928] 1952:276). On the one hand, Mannheim identifies the 'positivist' tradition whereby generations are regarded as sequential units. This sequence should follow a biological, measurable and progressive rhythm:

[4] Á la Ortega y Gasset (1934) and Julían Marías' (1961) 'historical method of generations'.
[5] The binary of diachronic and synchronic dimensions for generational building comes from Rosenthal (2000:166).

every 15-30 years a new generation appears. Hence, the problem would be to identify the proper rhythm and when to begin counting. This reading is mainly associated with French intellectuals such as Auguste Comte. On the other hand, Mannheim describes the romantic-historical tradition, mainly relating to German thinkers such as Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger and Wilhelm Pinder. Here, the problem of generations does not concern an external biological cycle, but rather discovering an internal sense of time in human history, carried by different intellectual movements.

It is clear that Mannheim rejects the idea of a quantifiable biological rhythm. The biological cycle of birth and death affects the emergence of generations, yet there is no deterministic, law-like rhythm which steers human history. Further, it is difficult to see at first glance what is wrong with the romantic-historical approach. As I will show below, Mannheim employs the Heideggerian concept of destiny (*Schicksal*) and Pinder's notion of the 'non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous' (*Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen*). Moreover, his approach draws heavily on Dilthey's observation that the concept of generation refers to age groups which experience the same intellectual, political and social circumstances in their formative years (*Jahre der größten Aufnahmebereitschaft*).

Nonetheless, Mannheim is critical of this last aspect since "this romantic tendency in Germany completely obscured the fact that between the natural or physical and the mental spheres there is a level of existence at which social forces operate" (op. cit.: 284). The real problem is thus to clarify the extent to which generations are affected by the 'fabric of social process' (*Textur sozialen Geschehens*), particularly in times of accelerated social change *(beschleunigten Umwälzungserscheinungen*) (op. cit.: 286-287). By elucidating this problem, intellectuals and social movements may be better understood. This seems to be the most appropriate starting point to start to assemble the pieces of the puzzle.

To grapple with the problem and select the right pieces of the puzzle, Mannheim takes three steps (in the following, I draw on Corsten 2010:135:143). The first step is to clarify an adequate sociological figure when describing the generational bond. Mannheim claims (op. cit.: 288) that generations do not constitute any sort of 'concrete social bond' (akin to a tribe or some professional association). For Mannheim, being born at the same time is similar to sharing a class position

(*Klassenlage*), since the objective position (either the date of birth or class background) constrains and opens up opportunities (*schicksalsmäßig-verwandte Lagerung).*[6] The figure of location (*Lagerung)* illustrates the fact that those "who share the year of birth, are endowed with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process" (op. cit. 290). Regarded as a '*generation an sich'*, this generational location opens up a positive 'inherent' tendency to create similar modes of behaviour, feeling and thought. But this similar '*habitus'* is a second step to observe in order to move forward. What it is important to note here is that generational building starts with involvement in a similar social location. This objective position does not constitute a concrete group building, but a "weak tie" (Corsten 2003: 47; or "*loseren Bindungszusammenhang*", Corsten 2010:136).

The second step is crucial as it concerns the first connection between memory and generations. This second step is the aforementioned 'diachronic dimension'. Under the label of 'Fundamental Facts in Relation to Generations', Mannheim postulates five points regarding the generational phenomenon:

A.1) The continuous emergence of new participants in the cultural process (*Das stete Neueinsetzen neuer Kulturträger*);

A.2) The continuous withdrawal of previous participants in the process of culture (*des steten Abganges früherer Kulturträger*);

A.3) Members of any generation can only participate in a temporally limited section of the historical process (*die Träger eines jeweiligen Generationszusammenhanges nur an einem zeitlich umgrenzten Abschnitt des Geschichtsprozesses partizipieren);*

A.4) The necessity for constant transmission of the cultural heritage (*Die Notwendigkeit des steten Tradierens, Übertragens des ererbten Kulturgutes*);

A.5) Uninterrupted generational series (*Kontinuierlichkeit im Generationswechsel*);

[6] Instead of some alleged materialism, Mannheim draws on Heidegerian thinking ('Being-thrown-in-the-world' / *'In-die-Welt-geworfen-Sein'*) precisely when introducing the concept of fate (*Schicksal*) as an adjective (lost in the English translation).

As can be seen, the fundamental facts are related to a biological rhythm: people are born and they die. New individuals are continuously 'thrown into' society (A.1). They do not have experience of any economic boom, warfare or historical learning, only biological heredity. Therefore, they must be introduced into social life by means of socialisation, through the family and other institutions. Yet, at the same time, they experience new historical events and social circumstances. These events may raise 'fresh visions' (op. cit.: 293-294).

The withdrawal of previous participants (death) raises significant social problems (A.2). The most important one is the continuous process of collective forgetting. Diverse customs, stories, experiences vanish because of old people dying. Mannheim made a key observation which has been recently reappraised.[7] Forgetting is crucial to remembering as it would be impossible to remember everything. Indeed, people assign meaning by recollecting some events and excluding others. If we remembered every particular thing (like Jorge Luis Borges' character *Funes el memorioso*) the world would become meaningless. Of course, there are diverse sorts of collective forgetting (Connerton 2008); most of them are strategies of some social groups to hide shameful circumstances. The point for Mannheim, however, is a relational one: if death results in forgetting then it establishes a request to create forms of collective remembering and cultural heritage (A.4).

Henceforth, Mannheim offers two distinctions regarding the phenomenon of memory. First, past experiences can be "concretely incorporated in the present" (op. cit.: 295) as consciously recognized models (e.g. I remember my grandmother giving me sweets every Sunday) or as unconscious models, i.e. as implicit or virtual figures inherent in our actions (Connerton 1989). Drawing on Freud's oeuvre, Mannheim affirms that "the past in the form of reflection is much less significant, e.g. it extends over a much more restricted range of experience than that in which the past is only 'implicitly', 'virtually' present" (op. cit.: 295).

Second, Mannheim distinguishes between 'acquired' (*selbsterworbener*) and 'appropriated' (*angeeigneter*) memories. The first type is the result of what I can remember by myself, the latter are events recounted by others. It is true (and crucial) that Mannheim put more emphasis on 'acquired' memories, since these

[7] See, for example, Dimbath and Wehling (2011) and Esposito (2002).

recollections are the ones that individuals have. For Mannheim acquired memories have "real binding power" (op. cit. 294). But this is erroneous as appropriated memories (family memories, class memories, trans-national stories) too – everything collectively remembered – also have 'real binding power' (Eder 2005).

There is, however, a clear reason why Mannheim drew more attention to self-acquired memories. As I mentioned earlier, the starting point for generation bonding is to share a similar position in history, i.e. individuals (can) only participate in a limited part of the historical process (A.3). Mannheim goes a step further in this direction when indicating that these experiences "impinge upon a similarly 'stratified' consciousness'" (*Bewußtseinsschichtung*, op. cit: 297). Based on Dilthey's idea of formative years (*Jahren der größten Aufnahmebereitschaft)*, Mannheim claims that events experienced during youth leave the deepest impression, while all later experiences "tend to receive their meaning from this original set" (op. cit.: 298; see also: A. Assmann 2007: 34-35). Mannheim saw this point at around the age of 17 (op. cit.: 300) when individuals start to distance themselves from their primary socialization (i.e. conquering independence from the family through networks of peers). Consequently, to experience the same historical event at 70 years old and 21 years old would not be the same as old people have a reservoir of experiences to interpret the past while young people face historical facts as a radical novelty (Koselleck 2000: 24). In this sense, events experienced in the formative years create more *binding* power.

Nevertheless, it is important to maintain the distinction between acquired and appropriated memories. New participants are embedded in old stories. These stories must be appropriated, combined or neglected in light of biographical experiences. Hence individuals must deal not only with biographical events, but also face the burden of acquired pasts. Further, 'old participants' must cope with the questions and re-interpretations elaborated by 'young participants'. Mannheim also assumed that the tensions possibly brought about by the uninterrupted cycle of new and old generations (A.5) are smoothed by 'intermediary generations' (*zwischen Generationen*). All in all, regarding the diachronic dimension of the generational puzzle, the problem of generations is about how to cope with diverse 'cultural orders of temporality' (*kulturellen Regelung von Zeitlichkeit*, Matthes 1985:371).

Finally, I turn to the synchronic dimension via which Mannheim attempts to answer how a generational bond emerges. Here the last three main pieces are placed:

B.1) Generational location (*Generationslagerung*);
B.2) Generational coherence or connection (*Generationszusammenhang*);
B.3) Generational units (*Generationseinheiten*).

The 'generational location' should be evident (B.1). People born at the same point in time share diverse economic, political, social events. For Mannheim, those events which occur during youth leave the strongest marks. All posterior historical facts will be interpreted under the frame of these earlier circumstances. Corsten suggests that Mannheim's social location (*Lagerung*) can be translated into English as 'storage', stressing the "sequential time order of historical experiences stored in their biographical memories" (Corsten 2003:48). I propose to employ the concept of *generational site* in order to pursue the idea of a space in which stories of experienced events circulate while social relationships emerge (Tilly 2000). I will later return to the term in order to explain its underlying theoretical assumptions.

Mannheim understood the generational site as one surrounded by national boundaries: Chinese and German youth did not experience the same events simultaneously (op. cit.: 298). Edmunds and Turner (2005) call for overcoming Mannheim's national focus given recent global experiences (9/11, travelling, digital communication).[8]

Still, for Mannheim, highlighting the generational site is not sufficient to understand the entire phenomenon. Following the class metaphor, understanding the '*Generation an sich*' is not to grasp the '*Generation für sich*'. The generational site encloses only the possibility to foster real generational bonding, i.e. a generational connection[9] (B.2 *Generationszusammenhang*). This is the key concept of Mannheim's entire framework (Fietze 2009:41). The classical translation into 'generation as actuality' draws on Mannheim's explanation. For Mannheim the generational site contains

[8] Even though I agree that global events exist, and thus also transnational narratives, my starting point remains rooted in the nation. This is based mainly on my empirical findings. At least in the case of South-American stories, the weight of national narratives remains as strong as ever. In this sense, subsequent chapters should be regarded as an enquiry into four different generational sites, even though only two age-groups are involved.
[9] The translation of *Generationzusammenhang* as 'generational connection' is taken from Reulecke (2010:120).

only passive potentiality – slumbering potential – to develop 'actual' bonding (op. cit.: 303). In order to create a more concrete bond, participation in a 'common destiny' is required. Corsten has shown that the most appropriate translation of *'Zusammenhang'* is 'coherence'. Indeed, for Mannheim to participate in a common destiny also involves sharing a particular coherent standpoint. 'Basic Intentions' (*Grundintentionen*) and 'Principles of Construction' (*Gestaltungsprinzipien*)[10] are the concepts used to describe this common perspective. Here the concept of generational coherence resembles the concept of '*generational habitus*' (Eyerman and Turner 1998:98), but it can also be seen as a 'generational frame' (following Goffman's conceptualizing). Theoretically speaking, these intentions and principles are relevant because they allow the emergence of social bonds between people who have never actually had contact.

Participating in the same destiny implies not only sharing a generational frame of interpretation, but also becoming entangled in the 'complex of problems' posed by social change. For Mannheim some concrete answers might emerge in response to these social issues. Here, generational units (B.3) "develop similar ways of (re)acting in response to their generational problems" (Corsten 1999:254). Even though these 'units' share the same generational connection, they offer different solutions for the problems of their time. Within one 'generational connection', several antagonist generational units might appear (for a good illustration see different groups within the generation of the 68ers in Von der Goltz 2013). In this sense, all generational units share a "horizon of time perspectives, a dramatic coherence of past, present, and future" (Corsten 2003:49), but each one will come to terms with their past in a different way. By offering "a more adequate expression of the particular site of a generation as a whole" (Mannheim 1952 [1928]: 307), some specific generational units can expand generational bonding. Furthermore, whether this new principle offers a 'satisfying expression of their location', older generations can change their principles in order to find answers for emergent social problems. Accordingly, Mannheim affirms: "not only does the teacher educate his pupil, but the pupil educates his teacher too" (op. cit. 301).

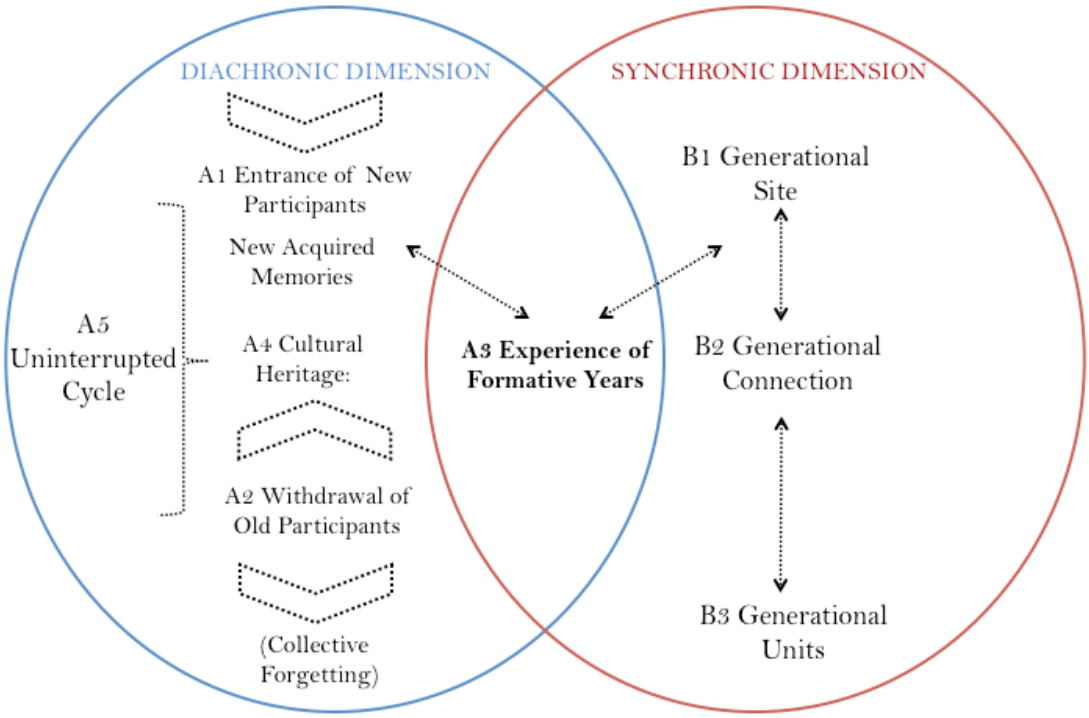
Common participation occurs only through a process of historical variation, i.e. generational connections are contingent on historical change (Edmunds and Turner

[10] Following Corsten's translation (1999:254).

2005:560; Fietze 2009:129-132). What this suggests is that historical events unleash social change, thereby bringing about new social relations. In this sense, the generational connection is contingent and based on the 'tempo of social change' (Fietze 2009:137-165). For a peasant group without experience of social change, no generational building can emerge. By contrast, in the case of rapid social change, individuals may not have sufficient time to build adequate expression of their social site. Therefore, generational building should be considered as doubly contingent or, as Corsten proposes (1999:263), affected by exogenous and endogenous elements. That is, some 'defining collective events' *(entscheidende Kollektivereignisse)* have to occur in order to create a generational site in which new stories circulate and social relations may develop. Afterwards, some common interpretation of this changing time is necessary in order to create a generational connection. Thus, whereas the natural cycle of birth and death is continuous, the social rhythm of generations is irregular (Mannheim [1928] 1952: 309).

At this point, Mannheim returns to the German romantic tradition, assuming the formation of 'generation entelechies' or 'generational styles'. Hence I suggest that after having created a complex theoretical framework, Mannheim finished his essay rather weakly. The aforementioned concepts, as well as the notion of 'spirit of an epoch' (*Zeitgeist*) and the figure of 'unattached (*freischwebend*) groups', hamper a sociological differentiation between the components of the generational phenomenon (Fietze 2009: 96-98; see also Aboim and Vasconcelos 2013:169-174). It thus appears that he could not resolve the puzzle because of these metaphysical concepts. Furthermore, some historians have remarked that all the examples offered by Mannheim correspond to masculine, elite associations under a nationalistic frame (Benninghaus 2005; Weisbrod 2005). Whether these critics are correct or not, historians have probably quickly undervalued the aforementioned pieces of the generational puzzle. The eight aforementioned components (illustrated in Figure 1, next page) still offer sociological value for understanding generations.

Figure 1
The puzzle of Karl Mannheim's problem of generations



It is, however, necessary to wonder if the puzzle is still incomplete and whether the most crucial piece, the 'experience of formative years' (A3), is sufficient to connect the diachronic and synchronic dimensions. The modern literature on social memory offers a far more complex understanding of temporal dimensions. Furthermore, over the last thirty years, new readings of Mannheim's essay have offered a renovated comprehension of generations as social constructions. By reviewing this literature, the advantages and shortcomings of Mannheim's perspective will become more evident.

1.2 After Mannheim: the cultural turn in generational studies

Mannheim's essay has provoked a large body of literature. I will firstly divide these studies into those that try to avoid one dimension of the puzzle and those that try to resolve and complete it.[11] I will highlight strong and weak arguments for every stance. In addition, with regard to the second group of approaches, I will concentrate on the relationship between memory and generations. By discussing these contributions to the understanding of generational building, new pieces of the puzzle will come to light.

The clearest example of avoiding the puzzle is Norman Ryder's article *The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change* (1965). Ryder voices the very same concern as Mannheim did in his essay: the entrance of new participants ('the invasion of barbarians') and the continual withdrawal of their predecessors (Ryder 1965: 844). Ryder understood the study of this demographic cycle via the label 'cohort', thereby defining it as "the aggregate of individuals (within some population definition) who experienced the same event within the same time interval" (op. cit.: 845). As can be seen, Ryder restricts his perspective to only one piece of the puzzle, namely, the generational location. All other components of the puzzle, Ryder implies, are pointless, especially efforts to search for some sort of collective bonding of thought and action (op. cit.: 853). The concept of generation is thus considered only to the extent of describing a 'temporal unit of kinship structure'. Following Ryder, diverse scholars – particularly within the North American tradition (Elder 1994; Elder et al. 2003; Kertzer 1983; Pilcher 1984) – have opted for the concept of 'cohort'. They understood generations only as a genealogical relationship, thereby avoiding the concept of generations as a cultural, collective bond.

There is a second way of avoiding the generational puzzle which stems from the vast field of memory studies. By researching how a traumatic past impacts on generations born after such events, some scholars in this tradition have taken a particular generational perspective. The clearest examples are studies conducted under the frame of 'post-memory' (Hirsch 1997, 2008, 2012). Here, a traumatic event such as

[11] Comprehensive reviews of the literature on generations can also be found in Corsten (2003:50-59) and Fietzte (2009:41-59). In addition, for two informed reviews of the literature and revamped proposals (whch I will not follow), see Braungart and Braungart (1986) and Alwin and McCammon (2007).

the Holocaust is analysed in terms of "a structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience" (2008: 106). The space of transmission and heredity is "the language of family, the language of the body in the forms of nonverbal and non-cognitive symptoms" (op. cit.: 115). There is no doubt that difficult historical events impose an emotional burden on subsequent generations of victims and perpetrators. The concept of post-memory is, however, constrained by a number of points. On the one hand, the family framework can limit the scope of generational relationships (Serpente 2011). Particularly, this is evident in cases of memory encapsulation into victim stories, although a traumatic past involves wider national or transnational contexts. On the other hand, an exclusive focus on the diachronic side of the generational puzzle (the transmission of traumatic knowledge) might avoid asking how new experiences interrupt or reinterpret this cultural heritage by means of new generational 'fresh' interpretations. From my point of view, the post-memory approach neglects the synchronic aspect of the generational dimension.

By taking experiences which occurred in the formative years as a linking mechanism, Mannheim's theory seems to disregard the influence of past transmission. However, by considering either acquired or appropriated memories, Mannheim's essay is deeply informed by an understanding of 'cultural heritage'. The point is that his understanding considers both the diachronic and synchronic dimensions.

Gabriele Rosenthal notes the risk of focusing merely on the formative or critical years. Supporting Mannheim's complex understanding of generations, she also emphasizes the weight of family memory and the relationships between generations as bedrocks of generational building (2000:165-166). Furthermore, she stresses the role of future interpretations over past formative years – what Corsten calls 'biographical revisions' (2003) – including the significance of childhood experiences. As John Bodnar has pointed out, "generational memory is formed in the passage of time, not simply born in pivotal decades and events" (2006:35). In other words, youthful experiences go through new interpretations in adult periods. The opposite would mean to freeze a state of being which emerged during one's youth.

Still, the thesis of the most 'impressionable years' is a matter of recurrent appraisal. One of the inaugural essays of the new wave of generational studies concentrates on this thesis of formative years: Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott's *Generations*

and Collective Memory (1989) is a quantitative attempt to examine Mannheim's 'generational hypothesis' of the formative or critical years. The aim was to verify if there are indeed memories which distinguish cohorts and if those memories correspond to events that occurred during youth. By confirming the generational hypothesis, if would be possible "to speak of a true generation" (op. cit.: 359). Broadly speaking, the generational hypothesis of formative years was initially confirmed. Using a national survey of 1,410 cases in the United States – asking for the two most important national or world events remembered in the last 50 years – individuals over 18 years of age recalled mainly those events which occurred during their adolescence and early adulthood (16–27 years old).[12]

However, two caveats mentioned by the authors deserve attention. First, if age is the most important predictor of collective remembering, there are nevertheless events recollected by certain social groups and disregarded by others. The most salient examples are those concerning social conflicts and involving civil and women's rights. Whereas white people and the male population hardly mentioned those events, the black population and women regarded those events as milestones. Thus it is possible to sustain both that a generational site is populated by different memory-groups, and that each group (e.g. ethnic or gendered memories) can also be divided into generational layers.[13] The second caveat concerns the events mentioned by people who did not experience them, i.e. appropriated memories, such as the Vietnam War generation remembering the Second World War. In this case, Schuman and Scott drew attention to the fact that even if the same event is mentioned, different meanings are associated with it.[14]

Howard Schuman returns to the topic several times, along with other authors (Schuman et al. 1997, Schuman and Corning 2011, 2014, Schuman and Rodgers 2004). By conducting new surveys, these authors continuosly confirm the hypothesis

[12]Afterwards, Schuman and Rogers (2004: 251) using new national surveys extended the range to 12-29 years old. Even later, Schuman and Corning (2011) claim: "it seems best to call the 5-30 age span the "critical period" or "critical years" for early memories and to reserve the term "reminiscence bump" for particular peaks that have substantive significance within the larger time span" (2011:157).

[13]See for African American identity, Eyerman (2001, 2002); for 'gendered generations' see McDaniel (2002) and Edmunds (2002). Nevertheless, until now, as Edmunds and Turner (2002b) pointed out, the relationship between different strata (gender, class, ethnicity) within a cohort has been under-theorized.

[14]Griffin (2004), using the same sample, also found noticeable regional differences (north/south).

of formative or critiral years. In addition, they have continuonsly shown some nuances to the critical hypothesis. For instance, some events that were briefly mentioned in the survey of 1985 reappeared in later surveys (e.g the economic crash of 1929 is increasingly mentioned in the course of the recent financial crisis). In this sense, scholars affirm that "memories previously appearing as primary can be overshadowed by more recent memories – or conceivably by still older ones resurrected because of new happenings" (Schuman and Rodgers 2004:218). This was of course a starting point for modern memory studies (Schwartz et al. 1986).

All in all, events that occur in youth seem to be important for processes of remembering. Cognitive studies coined the term 'reminiscence bump' in order to describe the fact that the main events recalled came from adolescence and early adulthood finished (Markowitsch 2010: 280). As Martin Conway has proposed, "Vivid memories are an important part of [life] narrative[s] and their increased frequency in the period 10 to 25 years reflects a period when identity emerges and stabilizes and that is, consequently, a critical period in the generation of a life narrative. The reminiscence bump, a collection of personally relevant vivid memories, is part of what remains in memory from this period" (1997:33). Yet, the mere fact of remembering some collective experiences is far from sufficient for talking about generational building. Generational memories might be modified, and reinterpretations of former events play a crucial role when fostering some form of generational bond. Cultural sociology offers a further hint regarding understanding how narrative and mnemonic dynamics interact at the generational level.

A renewal of the cultural sociology of generations is visible in the work of June Edmunds, Ronald Eyerman and Bryan Turner. They depart from the concept of cohort and attempt to understand how generations became effective social networks in the course of organizing collective memories, i.e. by seeking "to understand how generations are constitued through the institutionalization of memory through collective rituals and narratives" (Eyerman and B. Turner 1998:93). Generations are understood as collective responses to traumatic events (wars, civil conflicts, natural disasters, economic crisis and so forth) whereby a particular age group is brought together (Edmunds and B. Turner 2002b:7). These collective responses are formulated by intellectuals "who give expression to the traumatic experience" (ibid). They shed light on how traumatic events are regarded as formative for a 'generational consciousness'.

Ron Eyerman (2001, 2002) developed this approach by studying the formation of African-American identity. Drawing upon the conceptualization of cultural trauma (Alexander et al. 2004; see also Eyerman 2004, 2012), he describes how the collective remembering of slavery takes on diverse forms in different generations, i.e. each generation elaborates different responses and narratives to the original set of traumatic circumstances. The variability of interpretations depends on the historical circumstances of each generation. Eyerman's assumption is that mnemonic devices such as newspapers, radio or television help to (re)elaborate this traumatic experience in the course of different generations. Hence, appropriated memories become more important – generationally speaking – than the original set of events. Furthermore, instead of focusing only on the genealogical transmission of this traumatic past, Eyerman pursues the role played by social movements in order to reformulate the past according to present needs. Social movements facilitate "the interweaving of individual stories and biographies into a collective, unified frame, a collective narrative" (Eyerman 2002:52). This process of identification carried out through social movements is considered as 'cognitive praxis'. The process of collective remembering then involves sharing a collective bond through a narrative understanding of a common past and a common future (op. cit.: 58).

Bryan Turner and June Edmunds drew attention to certain cultural dispositions which bring about a common generational *habitus*. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's theory, they thus interpreted generational bonding as strategies to preserve cultural and material resources. The uninterrupted cycle of generations is interpreted here as a conflict of resources whereby passive and active generations rotate around each other (like Pareto's circulation of elites, B. Turner 2002:14). Active or strategic generations emerge when some traumatic events present opportunities to change the established conditions, thereby introducing and enforcing a new lifestyle (B. Turner 2002:16-24, Edmunds and B. Turner 2005:561). A clear illustration would be the post-war baby boomers "in which a mass consumer revolution transformed popular taste and life styles" (B. Turner 2002:24).

Eyerman's proposal appears to be consistent and provides crucial insights for the comprehension of generational building. The linking of the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of the generational puzzle is understood as both a narrative process of collective remembering and a connection between biography and history brought about by social movements. This observation will be relevant, for example,

when elaborating on the narrative put forward by Chilean youth after the recent cycle of student mobilization. However, the concept of cultural trauma has attracted harsh criticism (Joas 2005, Kansteiner and Weilnböck 2010) because of the vague interconnection between the psychological and collective spheres. Indeed, Mannheim's idea of 'defining collective events' should be left open (Kraft and Weißhaupt 2009: 26-27), encompassing 'difficult pasts' (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2009) or 'triumphal events' (Giesen 2004b). Turner and Edmunds' proposal is valuable in order to understand intellectual disputes (as Bourdieu's work *les règles de l'art*), but it has less explanatory value for the development of a more sociological perspective. In fact, Martin Kohli (2002:540) has shown that no conflict exists between different family generations; conversely, there is visible solidarity between them. On the other hand, the link between traumatic experiences, intellectuals and generational *habitus* is still vague (for further criticism, see Aboim and Vasconcelos 2013:171).

Memory and narratives are also important terms in current European research on generations (Bohnenkamp et al. 2009, Kraft and Weißhaupt 2009, Scherger 2012, Von der Goltz 2011). In particular, there exists a large tradition of research into generations in Germany. Most of them attempt to analyse particular age groups stemming from periods of gruesome history (prewar, Second World War, the Holocaust). Moreover, the international cycle of social mobilization during the sixties – the '68 generation – led to research on more 'triumphal' narratives. Indeed, by researching the biographies of integrants of this social movement, Hans Bude (1997) coined the term 'feeling of attachment' (*Zugehörigkeitsgefühle)* to understand the generational connection.

Bude (1997, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2005) follows Mannheim very closely in developing his approach. He particularly stresses the idea that the generational connection conveys an emotional collective identification – a distinctive *we* – which is elaborated through narratives, symbols and catchwords. He notes that generations are crucial to understanding how particular biographies are emotionally connected to historical events (1997: 201) and strongly affirms that generations are always symbols of rupture and breaking (2000b: 190), thereby creating a novel temporal sense of we-attachment or we-feeling *(Wir-Gefühl*). Following Mannheim, collective experiences occurring during formative years lead to communities of remembering and experience *(Erfahrung- und Erinnerungsgemeinschaften)* (Bude 1999: 27). Bude points out that the distance between the formative years and subsequent ones not only

produces a variety of generational units – different political perspectives – but also an important elaboration of recollections. These reinterpretations pave the way to consider generations as narrative communities (*Erzählsgemeinschaft*).

Nevertheless, Bude's idea of generations as social spaces of conflict might be misleading. The generational site is wide open to involving the narratives of both *continuity* and *conflict* (Andrews 2002:82, Kohli 1996:2, Parnes et al. 2008: 219-235). Pierre Nora – one of the founders of modern memory studies – understood generations more adequately as both a "product of memory, an effect of remembering" (1996: 522) and "fabricators of *lieux de mémoire*" (op. cit.: 526). This double meaning (product of/fabricator of) stands in the middle of the generational puzzle: "no rupture without a hypothesis of continuity, no selection of memory without resurrection of another memory" (op. cit.: 515). Nora emphasizes how generations relate to each other ('hypothesis of continuity') and how each generation creates mnemonic devices (public spaces, newspapers, photographs, mass symbols) to 'immemorialize' its own past and promote generational rupture.

Bude's insistence on leaving behind any reference to genealogy might also be misleading (Bude 2000b:193-194; similarly, Matthes 1985:359). This seems surprising given that the German generation of '68 is often understood in terms of a reaction to family silence about the wrongdoings during the Second World War (N. Frei 2008, Nehring 2011, Weigel 2005). Certainly, it is as insufficient to separate family memory from the generational building as to separate generations from ways of coming to terms with the past in the public and family spheres. The genealogical dimension of generations continues affecting emergent generational connections (Jureit 2005, 2010, Karstein 2009, Leccardi and Feixa 2011, Parnes et al. 2008).

Gabriele Rosenthal (2000) further developed this aspect by insisting on the intertwining of historical connections with genealogical sequences. Drawing on empirical research into biographical stories of individuals born in Germany and Israel (Rosenthal 1993, 1997), she concentrates on the impact of intergenerational dialogue for the construction of 'historical' generations. She recognizes that new generational connections do not necessarily emerge in biographical and collective narratives. Yet, when these generational connections do emerge, they depend heavily on both the location and the relationship between older and newer generations, as well as on the intergenerational dialogue developed within families.

Moreover, for Rosenthal, generational connections are based on the interpretations and reinterpretations of defining collective events. Hence, Mannheim's assumption of the 'participation in some common destiny' must be critically appraised. The generational problem turns out to concern not only how events occurring during youth impact on the life course of their participants, but also the question of how individuals continuously elaborate the past. Thus, generational research might move away from an exclusive focus on youth: in every phase of life new events can pave the way for new generational connections involving different stories. The idea of continuous processes of reinterpretation allows us to understand that generations mobilize different stories about the past. However, even though experiences of almost all years are relevant, Rosenthal reaffirms the fact that the moments in which 'life-course' events take place are crucial (for a similar rationale, see Passerini 1992:10-15).

Certainly, the concept of the life course provides an important addendum for resolving the generational puzzle (Corsten 1999:262; Eder 2007:32; Fietze 2009:122-123). As a dimension of modern temporality (Kohli 1985, 2002), the life course is the sequence of institutional orders in which biographies are embedded from birth to death (Mayer 2004:163). Each institutional order (e.g. education system) provides roles, norms, hierarchical divisions, opportunities and restraints, thus opening up different trajectories, social pathways and turning points (Elder et al. 2003:8). Economic and gender inequalities impact on life courses (e.g. abandoning primary school or a time for caring; Mayer 2004:166). For sure, there are tendencies of de-institutionalization (Kohli 2002:528) and multiple variations according to the intertwining of the form of the state and economic markets (Mayer 2004:166-167).

The emergence of a generational site is linked to the sharing of an institutionalized life course. Indeed, this also concerns the relevance of the phase of youth (Fietze 2009:118-122). During adolescence, individuals go through institutions of socialization which stimulate networks of peers (cultural circles in terms of Corsten 1999). These social networks allow a sense of distance from both family and cultural heritage. During youth, the historical past can be opened up to criticism and the future to countless expectations. Nonetheless, if life courses are sequenced, new turning points (either biographical or macro events) might alter the meanings attributed to the young formative years (for the concept of 'turning point', see Abbott 2002).

Contemporary readings of Mannheim's essay offer at least two preliminary conclusions. Firstly, both dimensions (synchronic and diachronic) remain salient for present generational understanding. Pierre Nora's double comprehension of generations as 'products of memory' and 'fabricators of memories' echoes this dichotomy. Generational memories are still informed by the thesis of the reminiscence bump ('the impressionable years') and the defining character of some collective experiences. The notion of a shared generational site might be a useful working hypothesis when modern literature on life courses is adopted. On the other hand, the diachronic dimension is part and parcel of generational understanding. Family memories and collective remembering of difficult/triumphant pasts configure the main setting of generational relationships.

Secondly, the thesis of formative years – albeit relevant – poses multiple problems when taking it as the linking mechanism between synchronic and diachronic dimensions. New events might unleash reinterpretations as well as promote the recovery of 'latent' memories. Ultimately, Mannheim's notion of 'participation in the same destiny' hinders a more dynamic understanding of generational building. Instead of a 'frozen' youth-oriented generational frame, I suggest understanding this process by means of narrative approaches for identity construction.

Before I turn to narrativity, I will, however, expand the notion of memory involved in generational studies. It is not only Hirsch's post-memory framework that focuses exclusively on family memories. Myriad research restricts intergenerational relationships to the setting of family transmission. The field of collective memory studies – barely regarded by generational (esp. historian) researchers – provides useful heuristic tools for understanding the memory dynamics of (inter)generational memories. By introducing the concept of 'memory supports', I will illuminate more variables at stake.

1.3 Memory supports

Maurice Halbwachs's inaugural theorizing of social frameworks of memory (1925) drew attention to an important feature of memory. As soon as new events change social frames of reference, both individual and collective groups develop different versions of the past. As Jeffrey Olick states: "Memory, for Halbwachs, is first of all framed in the present as much as in the past, variable rather than constant" (2010:155). Undoubtedly, the options for reconstructing the past are limited (Schwartz 2010). It would be difficult nowadays to neglect the Holocaust or the cases of the '*desaparecidos*' in the Southern Cone. However, certain stories concerning a difficult past become more robust or weaken during the course of time. Alexander (2002) and Giesen (2004b), for instance, demonstrated shifting representations of the Holocaust in the public sphere in the US and Germany, respectively. Stern (2004, 2006, 2010) and Vezetti (2002, 2009) have, respectively, made similar efforts to understand contesting memories over the last Chilean and Argentinean right-wing dictatorships.

References to the past are contingent and conflicts over memory emerge as soon as groups raise different interpretations. As Kansteiner (2002:195) pointed out: "historical representations are negotiated, selective, present-oriented and relative". Yet, each story requires to be performed in order to be confirmed or rejected by an audience (Alexander 2004). At this performative level, different 'memory supports' can be observed.

Memory literature has identified a variety of such supports. Peter Burke refers to different 'media' (oral traditions, written records, images, rituals and space) in order to describe how memories "are affected by the social organization of transmission and the different media employed" (1989:100). Marita Sturken brings up 'technologies of memory', encompassing "public art, memorials, docudramas, television images, photographs (…) even bodies themselves" (1997:10). Similarly, Aleida Assmann (2006a: 31-36) distinguishes three interconnected memory carriers (*Träger*): the individual brain, social communication and symbolic forms such as texts, images, memorials, museums and commemorations. In this sense, memories are supported through natural and social devices in order to be preserved or transformed in the course of years, decades and centuries. By the same token, Klaus Eder stresses that "collective identities are linked to objects as their carriers, these

objects become carriers of generalized emotions that are built into the object, into images or text" (Eder 2009: 431).

Following these approaches closely, I suggest that a) emotions, b) communications and c) cultural artefacts (written texts, songs, images, rituals, places) can be understood as memory supports which transmit the past, thereby enabling certain stories to be more present than others. These stories circulate by means of memory supports, from peer conversations, via Facebook, to songs and rites. Memory supports aim to link 'collected memories' – understood as "aggregated individual memories of members of a group" (Olick 1999:338) – with 'collective memories' identified as "public discourses about the past as wholes" (Olick 1999: 345).

According to Vezzeti (2002: 32-33), memories rest on the enduring strength of their supports. Some memory supports (e.g. monuments, commemorations, schoolbooks) are sites of struggles between civil society groups, institutions and state or transnational networks over preserving (or blocking) difficult pasts (Jelin 2003). Ultimately, memory supports are products of a broader set of 'mnemonic practices' (Olick and Robbins 1998).

I will briefly describe these three memory supports, which are strongly interconnected.

A) *Emotions*. It might appear obvious to state that our cognitive system supports our recollections. The brain has generally been regarded as the main storage for our remembrances. However, our traditional image has been challenged by neurological research. As Jeffrey Olick has reported: "the process of remembering (…) does not involve the 'reappearance' or 'reproduction' of an experience in its original form, but the cobbling together of a 'new' memory" (Olick, 1999: 340). In this neurological sense, remembrance is basically performed as a network that mixes past information with present settings. This process brings together past and present settings and is strongly mediated through our emotions. Welzer and Markowitsch show that biographical memories are strongly related to emotions since "emotions play an essential role in evaluating events, that is, in interpreting events and then attributing a level of importance to them" (2005:74).

The centrality of emotions is also related to the inscription of events in our bodies. It is certainly true that "the body as an important 'site of memory' is frequently

discussed in studies of trauma" (Misztal 2003:81; see also D. Jara 2012). Indeed, in the case of many of my interviewees, especially when talking about violent experiences at home, in school or on the streets (rape, psychical abuse, beatings), the body appears to be the most important support.[15] For people living in poverty without access to some cultural supports or restricted patterns of communication, due to fear, the experience of violence is chiefly communicated through the body (e.g. signalling during an interview the effects of violence). For those people experiencing childhood or adolescence during dictatorship, fear was the most important subject when narrating the past. Also when recounting current feelings about street insecurity, fear emerges as the main topic of the upper and lower classes. Ultimately, fear turns out to be a generational distinction, e.g. when young people stress that they grew up in a democracy, 'without fear any longer'.

Positive emotions can also play a role, especially when recollecting 'triumphal memories'. When adults remember collective participation in a historical event ('I was there in the square defending our democracy') or when young people describe painting their bodies in public demonstrations, stories acquire an intense emotional character. Social movement narratives are highly informed by shared emotions of participation and engagement (Benford 2002, Polletta 2002).

In the following, I will draw on the concept of 'structures of feeling' (Williams 1961). For Raymond Williams, structures of feeling concern "meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt" (1977:162) which imbue whole periods, but also particular generations. Here, I use this notion in order to aggregate different generational emotions described as emerging from 'breaking' events or from particular periods (see 7.1). Fear, nostalgia, illusion, uncertainty will be paramount in recounting generational experiences.

B) *Communications*. Whereas Maurice Halbwachs concentrated on the social frameworks of memory, Frederic Bartlett (1995 [1932]) investigated how memory works in psychological terms. He described how individuals rely on narrative devices to recount what they recall. He uses the term 'schemata' to denominate those narrative tools. Schemata stem from each period and each society, linking the individual process of remembering with the social context (Wertsch 2002). For

[15] It is important to remark that I am dealing neither with victims of dictatorships nor with their genealogies ([grand] children of victims).

Halbwachs and Bartlett, individuals from different social groups or distinct generations remember in different ways, since they draw on schemata or frames from different sociocultural contexts. Moreover, individuals are unable to recall and create a coherent story of the past unless they tell stories to each other and use narrative devices. In other terms, talking about the past supports remembrance. Hence, the past as a connective structure emerges through social communication in different contexts of social practices: in the family, circles of friends, neighbourhoods, workplaces, etc.

The relationship between Halbwachs' frameworks of memory and Goffman's theory of frames is evident (Irwin-Zarecka 1994: 4-5, Schwartz 1996: 909). For Goffman (1974), frames not only help to organize social interaction, but are also produced in social interaction. Likewise, memory frames not only organize our remembrance but are also created and reconstructed by the practice of conversational remembering (Middleton and Edwards 1990). Harald Welzer et al.'s research on German families shows to what extent the past changes through different generations in terms of conversational remembering, encompassing features of 'family loyalty' and 'cumulative heroization', i.e. "reshaping the grandparents' narratives the stories become better and better from generation to generation" (2010: 8-9; see also Bietti 2010, 2012 and Welzer et al. 2002).

Conversational remembering conveys not only stories concerning the past, but also 'silences about the past'. Silence may occupy a vast space of mnemonic practices (Belllagamba 2012, Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger 2010, Winter 2010, Zerubavel 2006). Hansen' Law of the third generation (1938), 'what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember', assumes that the past was not totally forgotten, but rather silenced or denied. Silence is an important memory support for commemorative practices: the 'minute of silence', for example, on Israel Holocaust Memorial Day (Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger 2010: 1109) or the Uruguayan protest's 'march of silence' remembering the dictatorship (Sempol 2006) illustrate this. In addition, Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger (2010) refer to the process of 'cacophonous commemoration' in order to show how multiple rituals are organized simultaneously to avoid or narrow the impact of other commemorations (Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Day). 'Communicative silences' (*kommunikatives Beschweigen*, A. Assmann 2013:42-49, following Lübbe's term) will became a crucial term for understanding the transmission of dictatorship in Southern Cone memories.

Finally, the media play an important role in collective remembering. Different means of diffusion, such as the printing press and the mass media, are imbued with the ability to produce enduring memories (Neiger et al. 2001, Schmidt 2010, Zierold 2010). Media allows both the circulation of canonical stories as well as blocking counter memories, being evidently a space of economic, symbolic and political power. Communications become increasingly stable due to these technologies, which allow social groups to preserve (or neglect) their stories over time. The expansion of interactive communication may be considered another feature of the communication media. Nowadays, conversations can be carried on in different parts of the world via means chat rooms, Twitter and Facebook, all conveying stories and images. Technological media can enhance generational networks, thus expanding transnational spaces (Erll 2012).

C) *Cultural Artefacts*. People occasionally tell stories about their families or their past based on the scripts of films and novels (Welzer et al. 2002). At this point, Iguarta and Paez recommend looking at 'cultural artefacts' which "help to mediate and are an external support for memory and forgetting" (1997:88). They include a large set of objects and practices which serve as 'reference points' to strengthen memories and preserve latent objects and images. Similar to the communicative media, cultural support expands the temporal scope of remembrance. As Jan Assmann observes (1995: 127), stories about the past can be handed down from generation to generation communicatively for approximately 80 or 100 years (three or four generations). This was already noted by Mannheim: when older generations die, society loses some of these stories and experiences. By contrast, cultural supports might preserve memory for hundreds of years through monuments, rites and sites of memory.

In the case of this study, I want to highlight at least four relevant types of cultural support.

Texts and songs. Writing has brought about an extensive collection of objects which preserve and remember stories. Social groups attempt to safeguard the past through different kinds of texts. For instance, sacred texts, historical chronologies, novels or educational books try to transmit canonical stories. Latin American memory research has especially drawn attention to archives as a crucial form of memory support. Finding a new archive is an important event in the development of

collective memory (Da Silva Catela and Jelin 2002). This is the reason why military regimes attempt to erase archives while, in turn, the reports of human right commissions are foundational (Feld 2002, Marchesi 2001). By the same token, songs (musical texts) might convey different past experiences, acting as generational bridges. During my interviews, people explained the connection between their parents in terms of hearing the same music. Young people in Chile bridge generational experiences through the songs (even tonalities) coming from the sixties during student demonstrations. As Ronald Eyerman has pointed out, "listening to a particular piece of music or gazing at a painting can evoke a strong emotional response connected to the past, and be formative of individual and collective memory" (2001:8).

Images and Icons. A second cultural support is the various sorts of images regarding the past. Jan Assmann's cultural memory concept stems not only from Halbwachs' work, but also from Aby Warburg's thesis that pictorial forms and styles can be passed on for centuries (1995:125). The past is transmitted and preserved through drawings, paintings, sculptures and murals, among others. Marianne Hirsh's work paid special attention to family albums in order to explain the mechanisms of traumatic post-memory (Hirsch 1997). Furthermore, films and TV series have played a key role for decades. As Olick et al. ascertain: "Nazis as well as the Holocaust have been condensation symbols of evil over many decades, though to be sure increasingly since the 1970s, with major landmarks like the Holocaust TV miniseries (1979) and Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List (1993)" (2011:30). Recently, Rothberg has demonstrated the multidirectional character of memory by examining the crossroads of holocaust and colonialism via texts, films and political movements. (2009:27). Some films, such as the Argentinean *'la noche de los lápices tristes'* and the recently broadcast TV miniseries *'Los Ochenta'* in Chile were used to recount difficult pasts and assure mild homogeneity. Finally, from the white scarves of the mothers of the *'plaza de mayo'* to the symbolical number of 30,000 victims of people disappearing in Argentina, icons play an important role to strengthen narratives (Alexander 2010).

Rituals. In the course of feasts, liturgies and commemorations, mythical stories or significant events are repeated over and over, connecting participants and observers to a shared past (Alexander 2004, Connerton 1989, Giesen 1999, Turner 1995). Members of families celebrate birthdays and anniversaries to recount remarkable

events. Former classmates meet at high-school reunions as 'autobiographical occasions' (Vinitzky-Seroissi 1998). Nations commemorate conquests, war triumphs and defeats. Commemorative days schedule nations and world agendas, enabling prominent speeches and the bonding of public actors with their audiences. Concerning the South American countries, commemorating independence days still plays an important role in fostering nationalism. After the Nuremberg Trials, courts became a special stage of memorial rituals (Giesen 2004b). The Argentinean trial of the nine commanders in chief in 1985 (*El Juicio a las Juntas)* and the innovative practice of 'truth trails' (*Juicios de la Verdad*) since 1995 are milestones in how collective memory develops. Without doubt, commemorations of coups d'état represent crucial and conflicting days for remembering (Candina 2002, Lorenz 2002). For a significant part of the Argentinean youth interviewed, the past was brought into the present through commemorations (e.g. In Argentina, the 30th anniversary of the coup d'état in 2006).

Spaces. Cities, squares, walls, memorials are typically regarded as essential and contesting memory supports (Collins and Hite 2013, Deckel 2013, Sturken 1997, Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991). Spaces are multivalent and sources of conflict, such as the 'plaza de mayo' in Buenos Aires and the main avenue 'Alameda' in Santiago de Chile. These places involve more than one story or remembrance, bringing about a sort of spatial palimpsest (Huyssen 2003). There is myriad research on the meaning of monuments, memorials, traumatic places such as concentration camps and places of torture (for the Southern Cone space, see Jelin and Langland 2003). Jureit (20010) paved the way for thinking of memorials as generational objects when analyzing the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (for the Holocaust as a generational object, see Schneider 2004). Furthermore, museums can be seen as meaningful spaces to experience the past. The recently opened *Museum of Memory and Human Rights* in Santiago de Chile (2010) helps young people in creating an image of a neglected past and offering a different stance vis-à-vis their parents' silence. Nonetheless, museums may also soften difficult pasts by "divorcing the past, legitimizing the present" (Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger 2007:73). Museums may be embedded with (trans)national narratives and might foster fictive projects of unification (Forchtner and Kølvraa 2015).

1.4 A narrative approach to generations

By introducing the notion of memory supports, I aim to establish a more complex setting for the circulation of biographical, generational and public stories. Emotions, communications and cultural artefacts encompass different dimensions of an interconnected process for remembering the past. Still, memory supports do not answer some elemental questions: why do these stories circulate at all? Why do individuals and social groups need to remember? We have been accustomed to hearing the same answer: in order to construct or preserve identities. But such a response is circular if identity is equated to collective memoires, and in turn, it returns us to a similar question: why do social groups require identity or are represented as identities? This discussion on collective identities is beyond the scope of this chapter and thesis. Instead, I will follow an approach which can at least help in finding a link between the synchronic and diachronic dimensions. I will work on the basis of a narrative approach to social identities via which the construction of generational stories can be linked to symbolical (temporal) boundaries and shared repertories of evaluation.

What is the notion of narrative about? Sociologically speaking, the most important feature of narratives is disclosed by their property to construct relationality. Narratives involve a process of linking events, meanings and identities.

Toolan proposed a minimalist definition of a narrative as "a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events" (2001:6). This feature was primarily revealed by literary scholars (e.g. Barthes 1975, Bremond 1980, Chatman 1978, Propp 1968). From fairy tales to biographical accounts, narratives are understood as temporal sequences of events including a beginning, a middle and an end. To be more precise, linguistics rediscovered Aristotle' notion of *plot* as the mimetic arrangements of human action that take place in tragic plays. Aristotle said in Poetics that "tragedy is the imitation of a complete and whole action having a proper magnitude (…) To be a whole is to have a beginning, and a middle, and an end" (Poetics, VII, 4-8). This event structure entails causal emplotment since the events are linked to each other as a whole (Linde 1986). 'Emplotment' is the configurational act of bringing together diverse events (Ricœur 1984:66). Thus Eliot defined narratives as a "sequence of

events into a whole so that the significance of each event can be understood through its relations to the whole" (Elliot 2005:3).

Furthermore, narratives provide a set of meaning structures. This point was primarily elaborated in historiography by Hayden White (1973, 1978, 1980, 1987). By analysing different sets of historical discourses, White realized that all narrative "points to a moral" (1980:17) or a "desire to moralize" events (1980:18). Hence White states that "[H]ow a given historical situation is to be configured depends on the historian's subtlety in matching up a specific plot structure with the set of historical events that he wishes to endow with a meaning of a particular kind. This is essentially a literary, that is to say fiction-making, operation" (1978:85). The very assumption is that the stream of events is not structured as narrative per se. Rather, narrators must make an effort to create a narrative structure. By establishing a beginning and ending a story, narratives inevitably establish a process of 'casing' (Bearman et al. 1999:502). It is thus observed that the very exercise of plotting conveys meaning.

Hayden White also observes that historians use narrative models such as classical genres in order to emplot their narratives. He draws on Northrop Frye's (1957) model of four macro genres (comedy, romance, tragedy, irony; see also below 2.2), stating that "the historical narrative points in two directions simultaneously: toward the events described in the narrative and toward the story type or myths which the historian has chosen to serve as the icon of the structure of the events" (2002:198). Under a constructivist approach, a group of social psychologists arrived at a similar conclusion (Brockmeier 2002, Brunner 1991, Gergen 1998). In particular, Jerome Bruner drew attention to the fact that recurrent stories offer "recipes for structuring experience" (2004:708). Individuals, through their life stories, can interpret social experiences by drawing upon common repertories of stories. Bruner proposed that "the daunting task-that remains (…) is to show in detail how, in particular instances, narrative organizes the structure of human experience – how, in a word, "life" comes to imitate "art" and vice versa" (1991:21) Eventually, for Jerome Bruner and subsequent narrative research, "one important way of characterizing a culture is by the narrative models it makes available for describing the course of a life" (Bruner 2004: 694; see also Elliot 2005 and Riessman 2008).

Narratives not only discursively connect events as temporal sequences and social meanings via common repertories of stories, but also create group identities. In order to describe this feature, Margaret Somers (1992, 1994) refers to the process of narrativity (or narrative practice): by telling stories or locating themselves "within a repertoire of emplotted stories" (Somers 1994:613) people develop a shared understanding of themselves. Henceforth, it is possible to speak of 'narrative identity' i.e. stories "in which actors identify themselves" (Somers 1992:34; see also Ricoeur 1991a, 1991b, Steinmetz 1992, Viehöver 2011).[16]

Somers' conceptualization of narrative draws attention to the fact that narratives change as social relationships evolve. Against an essentialist approach to identity, she notes that "the narrative identity approach embeds the actor within relationships and stories that shift over time and space" (1994:621). Henceforth, narrative understanding provides ways for attaining a concept of multiple and unfixed identities. A narrative approach appeals to a sociological understanding of relationality in which narratives are connected and historically embedded in different and changing social networks.

A sociological understanding of narratives is not disentangled of a methodological apparatus for recollecting stories and analysing them. The second chapter will precisely aim at clarifying a specific model of narrative interview and the components of structural narrative analysis (setting, characters, narrative templates and modes of emplotment).

Still, narrative approaches convey two more central notions which are key to the analytic and methodological design of this research. Hayden White reflects upon the "point of the story" (1978:83) when disclosing the 'evaluative structure' (Linde 1986) of historical studies. Similarly, Margaret Somers asserts: "evaluation enables us to make qualitative and lexical distinctions among the infinite variety of events, experiences, characters, institutional promises, and social factors that impinge on our lives" (Somers 1994:167). This evaluative component has been recognized as a central component of oral stories by sociolinguistics. William Labov's six-part model

[16] The term generationality (*Generationalität*) introduced by Jürgen Reulecke (2003) – and excessively drawn upon by German historiography – is another form of denominating generational narrative identities. Reulucke defines generationality as a mode of describing the discursive construct "in which people, as members of a specific age group, are located or locate themselves historically" (2010:119; *"Selbst-Oder Fremdverortung von Menschen in ihrer Zeit"* 2003: VIII).

of recounting daily-life episodes illuminates the 'evaluative clause' as central to an account for understanding stories. Labov defines the relevance of the evaluative component as follows: "[T]here is one important aspect of narrative which has not been discussed – perhaps the most important element in addition to the basic narrative clause. That is what we term the evaluation of the narrative: the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its raison d'être: why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at" (1972:368).[17]

This evaluative component developed, at the micro sociolinguistic level, can be described as the search for collective "repertoires of evaluation" (Lamont and Thévenot 2000). That is, narratives as temporal sequences (from past experiences to future expectations) embed not only narrative models, but also structured evaluations. Alexander and Smith (1993, 2010) have operationalised such repertoires as 'binary oppositions' or 'binary symbolic codes'. As they put forward, the intertwining of 'plot lines' and 'moral evaluations' might offer fertile terrain for comparative cultural sociology (2010:147). In particular, Alexander focused on the discourse of civil society, dismantling "internal symbolic structure" (2006:55) as a realm of networks of solidarity embedded in "narratives of good and evil" (2006:60). Alexander's research on binary codes has its roots in the late Durkheimian sociology of religion (1995 [1912]), structuralist linguistics (e.g. Saussure 1966 [1916]) and, particularly, cultural anthropology (among others, Lévi-Strauss 1955 and Douglas 1966).

Alexander's codification of the civil sphere might be regarded as *one* cultural structure amongst others (and fundamental for my own findings, see Chapter Six). Giesen (1999), for instance, proposes a theoretical division between primordial, traditional and universal codes. Here, following Koselleck's conceptualizing of basic counter-concepts (2000:16), I suggest that every narrative necessarily encloses a triple set of binary codes: temporal (before/ after), spatial (inner/ outer) and moral (good/ bad). These oppositions are endowed in narratives and constitute a set of intertwined boundaries amongst a) past-present-future times (before and after), b)

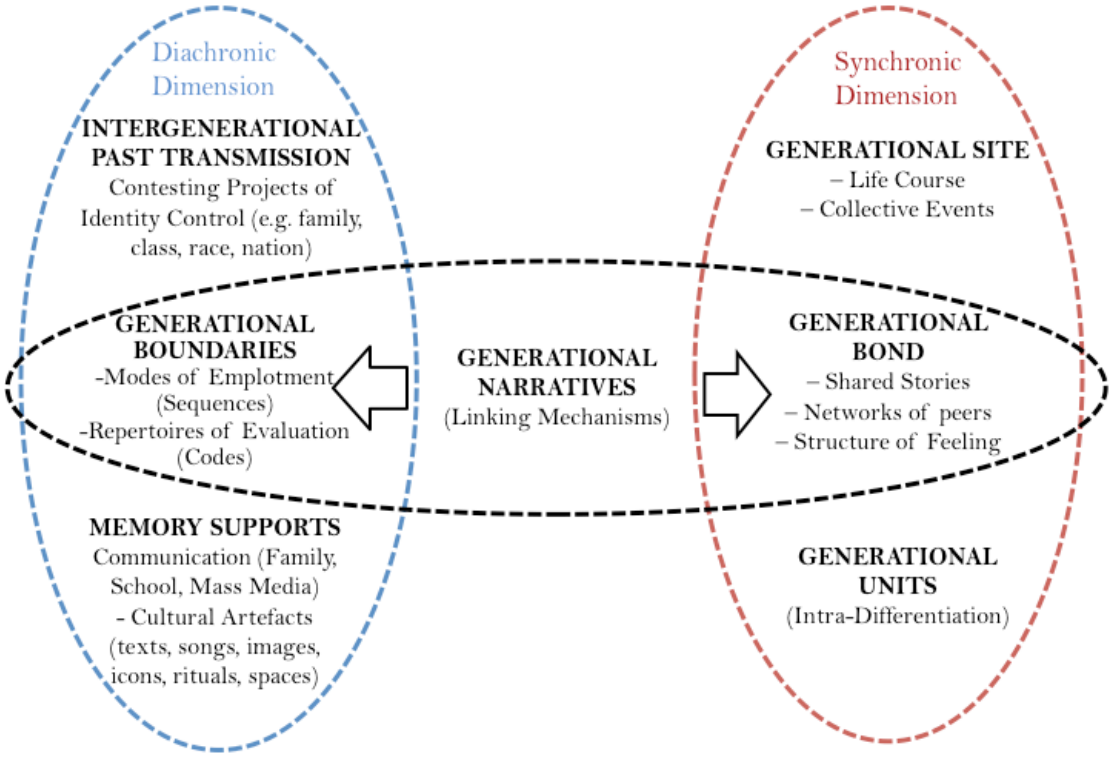
[17] Labov initially presented the six-part model, consisting of "[1] an orientation, proceeds to the [2] complication action, is suspended at the [3] focus of evaluation before the [4] resolution, concludes with the resolution, and returns the listener to the present time with [5] the coda" (1972: 369). A narrative might also contain an [6] abstract which summarizes the whole story (1972:370). For further exploration, see Labov (1997, 2013).

in-group and out-similarities ('us' and 'them') and c) moral repertoires of evaluation (positive and negative attributions). My tripartite division aims, on the one hand, to highlight 'temporal boundaries' as key markers of generational identity. As mere formal structures, on the other hand, the three codes might be combined in different ways to provide different intersections between cultural codes and narratives (see 7.3).

The notion of symbolic boundaries is the last component of a narrative approach. By sharing certain stories of the past, social actors draw identity boundaries. They demarcate the in-group – those who share the story – from an out-group who are excluded from the story (Eder 2006, Lamont 1992, 2000, Lamont and Molnár 2002, Tilly 2005). Narrative identity manifests itself when a story circulates within a social group, thereby attempting to impose a social boundary. The emergence of social boundaries refers to regular conflicts over the control of group identities, i.e. attempts by different groups to impose their narrative as canonical (Brunner 1991, Poletta 2002). In this sense, group identity is a 'project of control' (Harrison White 2008). As Harrison White suggestively claims: "Endless stories are talked by identities to each other, as part of their ongoing struggles with each other for control with respect to one another and on all sort of matters. This is the ground for forming identities, of generations and other sorts" (1992:42).

Let me now return to the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of generational building through this narrative approach (Figure 2, next page). The bridge between both aspects is now examined via generational narratives.

Figure 2
Generational narratives as linking mechanisms



The synchronic dimension entails three aspects, as in Manheim's original model. The *generational site* entails sequenced life courses as well as experiences of defining collective events. The intersection between macro events and biographical experiences at specific conjectures of the life course (childhood, formative years, adulthood) is the starting point of generational research. The thesis of formative, critical years refers precisely to the connection between certain historical circumstances with cognitive as well as social phases. Collective events are viewed as 'turning points' in a subject's life course.

Now, under a narrative approach, defining collective events not only modifies social relationships but also demands interpretation, which causes the emergence of new stories. In this sense, a large extent of the following chapters describes how people narrate their generational sites by selecting certain events, leaving behind others, thus enhancing or narrowing the meaning of some experiences at particular moments in their life courses. Ultimately, differences in social paths (especially visible with regard to social classes) will not only bestow different meanings on events, but also block (narratively speaking) the intersection between collective

events and life courses, thereby promoting strategies of social closure (upper-class memories).

Generational units are considered as internal differentiations brought about by contesting processes of meaning attribution. Generational units are internal attempts to control identity boundaries. The emergence of a strong generational unit (e.g. a new political party) could lead to the spread of some collective narrative to other age-cohorts and becoming canonical to different social groups (for the concept of 'canonical generations', see Ben-Ze'ev and Lomsky-Feder, 2009).[18]

Mannheim's concept of *Generationszusammenhang* is divided into two levels. At the synchronic level, it is understood as a *generational bond*. Primordially, the generational bond is informed by shared emotions attributed to defining experiences (crisis, earthquakes, wars). The narrative stance taken by storytellers about events (passive or active positions) will differentiate shared 'structures of feeling' (Williams 1961). Generational narratives will circulate precisely in life stories when narrating events as emotional experiences which may be remembered by coevals. Those stories circulating about their 'own' defining events might create a form of connection. As relational sociology has recently shown (Godart and White 2010, Mische 2011, Mützel and Fuhse 2008), social networks can be seen as emerging cultural formations since they are composed of stories. For example, stories about student mobilizations cohere around particular youth formations.

The second aspect of Manheim's *Generationszusammenhang* is elaborated under the notion of *generational boundaries*. Experiences of defining events bring about 'basic intentions' and 'principles of construction', according to Mannheim. However, taking those concepts as a sort of 'generational frame', it might give the impression of a frozen state from the 'impressionable years' onwards. Instead, I suggest focusing on repertoires of evaluation and modes of emplotment which draw temporal (before-after) and social boundaries (us-them). These boundaries are aligned to the diachronic side, not only because repertories and narratives evolve over time (e.g. from romantic to ironic modes of emplotment), but also because they react to

[18] In the following chapters, I will not look at particular youth organizations (for my methodological framework, see next chapter). I will rather concentrate on processes of meaning attribution (informed by gender, class, political, national cultures) and macro modes of emplotment. This sets me apart from the historiographical literature on political generations (for the use of 'generational politics' in recent historiography see, among others, Muñoz 2011 and Von der Goltz 2011, 2013).

contesting projects of control. That is to say that generational narratives emerge not only from particular circumstances, but also respond rather to previous sedimentary cultural codes (or new ones). Corsten (2001:46) coined the term '*Haben von Zeit*', literally 'the having of time', to highlight the fact that generational narratives enclose some period as their own time and distinguish it from older experiences and coming generations. The feature of relationality amongst generations has informed the diachronic side (Matthes 1985).

Notwithstanding, what German sociological literature assumes to be 'historical generations' (e.g. Fietze 2009) is a rare narrative of a total break with previous cultural patterns (see esp. the '68-ers). Stories circulating within the generational sites examined rather foster a hypothesis of continuity and inter-generational connection. As I shall demonstrate below, some canonical narratives maintain those boundaries and keep at bays (romantic) attempts of disruption. Nostalgic and comical plots (Chapter 3), consoling (Chapter 4) and cyclical plots (Chapter 5) will be examined as projects of inter-generational continuity in which there barely appears a 'we' generational feeling. This understanding allows us to leave behind recurrent normative assumptions (e.g. the distinction between banal/historical generations) in order to enhance a sociological understanding of broader cultural structures.

Given this rationale, one outcome of this research is to map out narrative mechanisms for controlling symbolic boundaries. Here the roles of family, school and (trans)national templates will be examined as different channels of *intergenerational past transmission.* Particularly, memories emerging in the context of post-dictatorships and processes of coming to terms with dictatorships will shed light on the solidification/weakening of canonical narratives. Furthermore, multiple communicative and cultural *memory supports* will be relevant to informing how different stories circulate. Henceforth, the diachronic dimension is not restricted to genealogic or family memory dynamics (without excluding them); rather, the scope is enlarged to embrace different forms of past transmission embedded in repertories of evaluation and modes of emplotment.[19]

By sharing stories of their common past and emplotting their biographies into collective repertories of interpretation, people develop *generational narratives.*

[19] Taking a narrative approach, recent generational research has already disclosed different narrative strategies of generational discourse. See, in particular, Bohnenkamp et al. (2009), Karstein (2009), Kraft and Weißhaupt (2009) and Thiessen (2009).

Generational narratives embed sequences of defining events as symbolic boundaries in which past-present-future times are differentiated. Generational boundaries might demarcate our 'own times' and cohere around older canonical narratives. The linking of experiences, feelings, 'own' stories (generational bond) and processes of sequentiality and collective meaning attribution (generational boundaries) bestows a great complexity on generational phenomena, and opens up the research field to be explored in the following.

All in all, the 'living bond of generations' (Halbwachs [1950] 1966) is a narrative dynamic. It depends on the future, not only because every narrative contains some horizon of expectation, but also because narratives evolve over time.

Chapter 2

Looking for stories in Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile

While there is a methodological framework corresponding to the theoretical link between generations, narratives and memories as developed so far, it is, furthermore, the context of the Southern cone post-dictatorial countries that frames ways of approaching these temporal structures.

As I have already pointed out in the general introduction, the specific conjunction between the (narrative) effect brought about by *historical distance* – thirty years after the end of the dictatorship in Argentina and forty years after the coup d'état in Chile – and the emergence of a new wave of youth political mobilization in both countries requires us to take into consideration the dynamics of social memory and generational building. A 'cycle of generations' – in Mannheim's terms, the withdrawal of old participants and the emergence of novel actors – leads to the question of how processes of collective remembering (blocking the past, contentious divided memories, the clarification of victims' tragedies, procedures against perpetrators) interact at the level of different generational experiences and social sites.

The focus on two generational sites – people born around the end of the nineteen-sixties and eighties – implies a working hypothesis. Those young persons who came of age during the decade of the two thousands do not have personal memories of a dictatorial past, but they have experienced the revival of student movements or youth organizations. They experienced the more 'deactivated' decade of the nineties and the transmission (or silencing) of a difficult past by family conversations, schoolteachers or the media during their childhood. The older group was selected because they experienced the fervour of the democratic transition process (Alfonsín's spring in Argentina and the plebiscite of 1989 in Chile) and increasing as well as decreasing sequences of social mobilization. Furthermore, and crucially, whereas the older group was likely to have been affected by the first stages of coming to terms with an authoritarian past (1983-1991), the younger ones may well have been framed by the sequence of memory debates that took place in the last decade (2003-2013). Here, Kirchner's government in Argentina and the commemoration of 30 years since

the coup d'état in Chile are of particular significance. In both temporal frames different stories circulated and repertoires of evaluation evolved.

The process of selecting generational sites was guided by three criteria. First, I wanted to go beyond the protagonist sixties and seventies generation as there is (a) already a remarkable body of literature on this period and its actors (see introduction), but also, and more importantly, because (b) the age groups selected constitute the first 'post-memory' identities. Although the older group experienced their childhood and part of their adolescence under dictatorship, the 'difficult past' is normally framed by previous age-groups, in this case the sixties or seventies generation and their experiences of violent polarization and the crimes against human rights that took place mostly between 1973 and 1978. None of my respondents claimed that they experienced the outbursts of violence and conflict as their parents did.

The second criterion might be seen as being more contentious. I claim that the necessity for victims' testimonies or their relatives' struggles in Latin American studies (after years of neglecting their tragedy) has mitigated the interest in the stories of ordinary people as a source of memory research (there are, of course, multiple exceptions. See, for instance, Jelin and Kaufmann 2000, Kaiser 2005, M.J. Reyes 2009, Cornejo et al. 2013). The notion of memory in Latin American Studies has, de facto, become synonymous with research on crimes against human rights or studies of dictatorships. As a result, the literature on memory has been increasingly dominated by the topic of transitional justice (particularly in the political sciences) or historical accounts of the seventies in Argentina and the eighties in Chile. I claim that memory studies might well embrace a much vaster territory. Here, I follow the argument of "bring[ing] people back" to collective memory studies (Schwartz and Schuman 2009:183) and focusing on the reception of public discourses (Kansteiner 2002:180).

My last criterion is based on similar reasons. Instead of focusing on elites and political activists in generational studies, as is commonly done, I shift to individuals who simply grew up *there* and played no particular role. This 'bottom-up' perspective, however, is employed precisely to observe how macro stories play a role (or not) when analysing generational stories.

In order to examine the circulation of generational stories and particular repertories of evaluation within each of them, a range of different methodological strategies was chosen. First, a pertinent instrument to 'grasp' the stories circulating within those generational sites was identified by setting up a 'narrative experiment' which required intensive fieldwork and included a diverse sample of participants (2.1). Second, I specified the main categories for codification and analysis (2.2). Drawing on narrative enquiry, I elaborated a formal procedure for examining generational stories and their narrative structures.

2.1 Grasping stories: instrument, fieldwork and sample

The first step in constructing my methodological framework involved developing an adequate 'device' to gather the stories circulating within those social contexts. Given my understanding of generational building, the instrument was elaborated under the guidelines of narrative theory.[17]

Catherine Riesmann (2008:11) defines narrative enquiry as follows: "the analyst is interested in how a speaker or writer assembles and sequences events and uses language and/or visual images to communicate meaning, that is, make particular points to an audience. Narrative analysts interrogate intention and language, *how* and *why* incidents are storied, not simply the content to which language refers." Given this narrative approach, traditional forms of research praxis such as variable-centred approaches might be left to one side (Riesmann 2008:12; see also Franzosi et al. 2012).

Examples of variable-centred approaches are generational studies based on survey models (e.g. Schuman and Rodgers 2004). Those studies presume a direct relationship between age and events without grasping processes of meaning attribution and sequentiality between events. They are suitable for simple matching between events selection and age cohorts. Still, the plain fact that one age cohort

[17] Methodologically, I draw on literature on narrative enquiry which focuses on sequentially, selectivity and meaning attribution. See esp.: Alexander (2003), Andrews (2007), Bal (1997), Bearman and Stovel (2000), Bernasconi (2011), Bruner (1991, 2004), Chatman (1978), Czarniawska (2004), Fischer-Rosenthal and Rosenthal (1997), Franzosi (1998, 2010), Franzosi et al. (2012), Gergen (1988), Hinchman and Hinchman (1997), Jacobs (1996), Jacobs and Sobieraj (2007), Kohli (1981), Labov (1972, 2013), Linde (1986), Ricoeur (1984, 1991a), Riessman (2008), Rosenthal (1993), Somers (1992, 1994), Spector-Mersel (2011), Steinmetz (1992), Toolan (2001), Viehöver (2011) and White (1978, 1980, 1987, 2002).

remembers, for example, the Vietnam War more than others – beyond a basic thesis of the most impressionable years – does not explain the meaning bestowed on this particular event. Furthermore, meaning attribution is normally linked to other past stories as well as to different horizons of expectation. Thus the simple identification of selected events with generational building in quantitative surveys is problematic.

From this perspective, as Martin Kohli pointed out (1981), narrative patterns noticeably emerge in biographical accounts or life stories. Later, Bearman and Stovel stressed that: "life stories provide an 'endogenous' account of how authors got from 'there' to where they are", i.e. life stories "reflect the elements that organize the process, as versus those selected from the analyst's hat" (2000:76).

2.1.1 A narrative experiment: remembering for the future

A principle of selection is crucial in terms of life stories (Rosenthal 1993, Specter-Mersol 2011). Kohli indicates that: "Life histories are (…) not a collection of all the events of the individual's life course, but rather 'structured self-images'" (1981:65). Those authors rightly argue that people select certain events when recounting their lives, thus leaving aside a great deal of information and avoiding contentious matters while making other aspects salient. Story coherence involves selecting and connecting events. Storytellers foster a sense of belonging through life stories, employing collective templates or sharing common story patterns to evoke collective events (see esp. Riesmann 2008, Rosenthal 1993). Differences in narrativity in life stories are examined as markers of contesting identity boundaries.

Rosenthal draws mostly on Fritz Schütze's model of narrative interviews (see the introduction in Küsters 2009, also Jovchelovitch and Bauer 2007). Here, based on the literature of life-story accounts (Bertaux and Kohli 1984, Cohler and Hostetler 2003), as well as the more rigid German model of narrative interviews, I have designed my own (more flexible) 'narrative experiment'. [18]

[18] The German narrative interview technique is an eliciting sequenced interview in which the interviewer proposes a topic of narration and must then be silent until the interviewee stops the main narration (normally this first phase lasts between 45 minutes and 2 hours). Later, the interviewer may pose certain questions regarding omissions or clarifications, yet never asking 'why questions' in order to avoid argumentation and promote narration.

Using an eliciting formulation, I invited people to recreate a 'future setting' in which a descendant (son, daughter, nephew, grandson or granddaughter) asks him or her to recount the past. I used the following 'narrative stimulus' (*Erzählstimulus*):

"Imagine that your daughter or son asks you to tell him/her about the world in which you grew up. What did the world look like back then? What were the most relevant facts and events which marked your childhood as well as your youth? Why did those events occur? What happened later in your world?

This narrative experiment, 'remembering for the future', has certain characteristics.[19] The family setting selected attempts to reconstruct Maurice Halbwachs' image of the 'living bond of generations' in which stories are usually handed down from grandparents to grandchildren (Halbwachs 1966: 63). Among the older cohort interviewed, they already had some experience of their own children or nephews asking them about their past.

Based on Schuman and Schwartz's (2009: 188) strategy of asking about the most reportable events, the question was set in the future which enhances a sense of perspective (i.e. temporal distance) and also stimulates the transmission of some events worth recounting for future generations.

The term 'generation' was omitted so that the question would not impose a category. The series of questions includes neither local (e.g. your city) nor national (e.g. your country) references. Instead, it uses abstract nouns such as 'your world' in order to allow participants to remain in their local, national or transnational setting. The use of 'why questions' was in an attempt to promote more intensive reporting of certain mentioned historical events.

A great part of the interviews was spent answering these opening questions. The initial recounting lasted from half an hour to one and a half hours. I often prompted the telling of their life stories through age-points (e.g. 'And what happened later in your youth?') or life-course sequences (e.g. 'Did you attend school?'). Three further questions were raised only when respondents presented an 'end point' (normally,

[19] I initially invited people to write a text in response to the same formulation. However, people preferred an oral interview for responding to such invitation. Nonetheless, I obtained 10 written narrative texts for the Chilean youth cohort. The written text also stimulated the use of pictures: *"Please, write a text including the answers to these questions as well as anything additional you would tell to your children. You can also include personal photos or pictures from magazines and newspapers".*

their present time in life). The first question made a comparison between their first description and their parents' world: *Do you think that there is a difference between this society and your parents' world?* (as well as your children's world in the case of the adult cohort). It is worth mentioning that the dictatorial past was indirectly mentioned via the 'parents' world', since I wanted to allow for forgetting, silence or unequivocal references to those times. But, if they mentioned them (i.e. a dictatorship or other historical events), I tried to find historical explanations (e.g. *According to you, why did such events take place?*).

The second question related to films, novels, places or images (memory supports) which they would recommend to their descendants in order to recount their own stories or different historical pasts. Finally, in order to close the interviews, I invited respondents to 'foresee' their futures. After going through their life stories from past to present, as well as going back to their parents' time, they were invited to complete the 'temporal path' by looking towards the future.

2.1.2 Fieldwork: Interviewing in Buenos Aires and Santiago

Between October 2012 and January 2013 I conducted 60 interviews in Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile. The interviews lasted one hour on average. While the shortest one took only thirty minutes, the longest one lasted two hours. Every interview was recorded and later anonymously transcribed.

The first step in the fieldwork was to involve people in the setting of 'remembering for the future'. The experiment entailed a theatrical situation. I acted as if asking from a future perspective, thereby pretending to know nothing about the past and, accordingly, the interviewee played the role of telling his or her life story to some fictional descendant. This setting also replicated a standard narrative scheme (see Toolan 2001:64) between a real author (the interviewee and his/her life history), the implied author (the person selecting and narrating some events for me), the implied reader (me playing the 'ignorant' role) and the real reader (me as a Chilean upper-class doctoral student in Germany, assuming that all these traits might affect the interview setting).

When taking on the role of an implied author, people started to narrate easily. The majority of my respondents happily assumed the role bestowed upon them and made

comments about the felicitous occasion. Sometimes they talked to me as if I were their son (both old and young interviewees did so). Ultimately, some of the respondents requested a copy of the transcript in order to show it to their own children in the future.

Nevertheless, the narrative stimulus raised one major difficulty. The eliciting question did not specify whether I would like to hear about private or collective events. Upon questioning me, I always gave the same answer: as you wish. A crucial difference, to be analyzed in following chapters, subsequently emerged: while members of the upper and lower classes preferred to talk about private events, middle-class participants normally referred to public events and, without difficulty, connected their biographies to macro sequences (see Chapter Seven).

A second aspect of the fieldwork was the experience of 'moving' through the territory. In order to collect a rich sample I had to travel from downtown to distant municipalities. Indeed, the interviews were conducted not only in the cities of Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile, but also in the greater metropolitan areas (particularly in the case of Buenos Aires).

As a result, for the Argentine interviewees the scope corresponds to the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (Image 1, next page) including ten interviews within the city of Buenos Aires (Image 2, next page)[20] and 20 interviews in different *partidos* (municipalities)[21] outside the capital city. In the case of the latter, it took me between one and two hours to get to the interviewee's site.

[20] Balvanera, Belgrano, Caballito, La Paternal, Nuñez, Palermo, Pompeya, Recoleta, Villa Crespo, Villa Mitre.
[21] Almirante Brown (3), Esteban Echeverría, La Plata (3), Lanus (3), Lomas de Zamora (3), Merlo (2), Moreno (2), San Isidro (2), Vicente Lopez.

Image 1
Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires

Source: http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/gobierno/area-metropolitana-de-buenos-aires

Image 2
City of Buenos Aires

Source: http://mapoteca.educ.ar/mapa/ciudad-autonoma-de-buenos-aires/

For the Chilean interviews, the scope corresponds to the Metropolitan Region (Image 3). Yet, there were only 5 interviews outside the capital.[22] The other 25 interviews were conducted with people living in different municipalities inside the city (Image 4, next page).[23] In both national contexts, due to the urban social-class stratification of the capitals, social heterogeneity was achieved (see final sample outcome below).

Image 3
Santiago Metropolitan Region

Source: http://www.profesorenlinea.cl/imagenChilegeogra/RMImagen/mapaubicacion.jpg

[22] Paine, Peñaflor, Puente Alto (3).
[23] La Florida, La Granja (3), La Reina, Las Condes (5), Lo Barnechea (2), Lo Espejo, Santiago Centro (2), San Joaquín (2), Quilicura, Pedro Aguirre Cerda, Peñalolen (2), Providencia, Ñuñoa, Vitacura (2).

Image 4
City of Santiago de Chile

Source: http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transantiago

While middle- and upper-class interviewees were initially contacted via email, lower-class respondents were usually introduced by some contact (participants of civil or religious organizations). Nevertheless, the interview setting was chosen by each interviewee. Middle- and upper-class interviewees preferred coffee houses, restaurants or workplaces. For the lower-class milieu, the meeting place was usually their home (mainly in Chile) or a place near their home, a community centre or a public space. On these latter occasions, the territory (neighbourhood) was manifestly more present. By showing me their home, street, and evident signs of pauperization, the materiality of their life stories became blatant. As I will show in the next chapters, violence and street insecurity are cross topics of the lower-class interviewees. Here, the interview settings also functioned as a visualization mark of everyday violence.

2.1.3 The Sample

The final sample of individuals interviewed comprised 60 participants (Table 1). For each national capital, it included 30 persons. There were 24 persons interviewed in the adult cohort (12 per country) whilst 36 persons of the young cohort participated (18 per country). The sample includes 26 men and 34 women.

Table 1
Number of participants by city and gender

	Buenos Aires	Santiago	Men	Women	TOTAL
1965-1974	12	12	12	12	24
1986-1994	18	18	14	22	36
TOTAL	30	30	26	34	60

Regarding each age cohort's distribution (Table 2), the adult cohort had a higher presence of people born between 1971 and 1974. As a result, the years 1970–1971 are the statistical mode. The average age at the time of the interviews was 42.9 years old. In the case of the younger cohort, there were more people born between 1988 and 1990. Here the mode is the year 1988 and the average age was 23.8 years old at the time of the interviews.

Table 2
Number of participants by age range for each city and cohort

	Buenos Aires	Santiago		Buenos Aires	Santiago
1965-1974	3	2	1986-1987	6	8
1986-1994	2	4	1988-1990	10	8
1971-1974	7	6	1991-1994	2	2
TOTAL	**12**	**12**		**18**	**18**

In socioeconomic terms I divided the sample into three strata, taking into account parents' education, their own education path, current profession, family income declared and place of residence (for an overarching understanding of Latin American stratification see Franco et al. 2007). I also regarded the use of language and main sources of friends' networks as class markers. In the first social stratum, I classified 21 persons as coming from upper- or middle-upper class backgrounds. In the second social stratum, pure middle class, I grouped 24 respondents. Finally, I considered 15 respondents haling from lower-middle- or lower-class backgrounds (Table 3).

Table 3
Number of participants for each social stratum and cohort

	Upper-Middle/Upper	Middle	Lower-Middle/Lower	TOTAL
1965-1974	7	9	8	24
1986-1994	14	15	7	36
TOTAL	21	24	15	60

In Chile, the eleven upper-class respondents lived in five municipalities (Las Condes, Vitacura, La Dehesa, Lo Barnechea and Providencia). Two declared having no political affiliation, five were right-wing oriented, and four were left-of-centre oriented. Regarding religious ascription, nine declared themselves Catholics, one Christian orthodox and one agnostic. Middle-class respondents came from six municipalities within the city (La Florida, Santiago Centro, Ñuñoa, Pedro Aguirre Cerda and San Joaquin) and three municipalities of the more distant Metropolitan Region (Paine, Peñaflor and Puente Alto). Six middle-class persons declared having no religious ascription and four were Catholics. Two interviewees were left-wing oriented, six were centre-left oriented and two were centre-right wing. The eight lower-class respondents came from four municipalities of Santiago (Peñalolen, La Granja, Lo Espejo and Quilicura). Four declared no political affiliation, one right-wing and three left-wing oriented. Four declared following Catholicism, two were Evangelic Christians and two did not follow any religion.

In Buenos Aires, upper-class respondents came from five *partidos* (Belgrano, San Isidro, Vicente Lopez, Recoleta and Palermo). Upper-middle-class interviewees lived in a different five *partidos* (Paternal, Flores, Burzaco, Lanus, Caballito and Villa

Crespo). Nine out of ten were Catholic, right-wing (and anti-Peronist) oriented. In addition, one young female was left-wing oriented and Jewish agnostic. The thirteen respondents from the middle-class context live in seven *partidos* (La Plata, Lanus, Esteban Echeverría, Lomas de Zamora [Banfield], Moreno, Nuñez, Villa Mitre). There was one Catholic, one religious Jew, and eleven agnostics. There were two right-wing oriented and eleven left or centre-left oriented. Of the latter, seven were Peronists.[24] The seven lower-class respondents came from four municipalities (Almirante Brown, Balvanera, Libertad and Lomas de Zamora). Two of them were Catholics, three Evangelical Christians and two had no religious ascription. Four declared being left-wing oriented and three of them declared no political orientation.

Given my Chilean roots, the construction of a heterogeneous Argentinean sample was especially demanding. Consequently, a fortnight was dedicated exclusively to meeting 'friends of friends'. Some of them facilitated first contacts and networks. A mixture of such contacts, hundreds of emails and snowball sampling allowed me to obtain a diverse sample of interviews. Obviously, it was much easier in Chile, even though I had to use an enormous range of contacts, friends and civil organizations in order to meet 'regular people' in different sectors. One important criterion for my interviews was avoiding people whom I knew before or who were too close to my private network (although this criterion was not entirely achieved in the case of four interviews in Santiago as they had had minimal contact with some of my relatives or friend in the past).

[24] In Buenos Aires, the middle class are usually regarded as right-wing oriented and anti-Peronist. As a matter of fact, the term 'middle class' is itself problematic and historically loaded, especially in Argentina (see the superb analysis of the Argentine middle class in Adamovsky 2009). I especially drew on the distinction between upper-middle class and middle class to differentiate between a better-off group (liberal professions, e.g. doctors or managers) who were more right-wing oriented and, on the other hand, the middle class relating to public-service sectors or descendants of the traditional working class. This division is still contested yet it made particular sense when examining the different stories of the economic crisis of 2001 (see 5.3).

2.2 Structural Narrative Analysis

The second step was to elaborate a sequenced procedure to examine all the collected stories. The analytical level is *not* at the micro level of narrative discourse (as in socio-linguistics, see Labov 1972) in which particular incidents are analyzed as structured narratives (e.g. violent incidents with a clear abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution and coda). In a more sociological tradition, as Catherine Riessman sustains, "[t]he discrete story that is the unit of analysis in Labov's definition gives way to an evolving series of stories that are framed in and through interaction" (2008: 6).

2.2.1 Coding

The first and most time-consuming process was to code the interviews. Via MAXQDA software v. 11.0, I codified all the life stories, resulting in a total of 10,847 codings. The codification process entails five macro aspects which might be regarded as basic elements of these stories: different kinds of events, evaluative codes and memory supports. The codification did not pretend to break up narrative sequences (as general categories or concepts do in grounded theory) but to organize them.

A first coding embraced all the events mentioned. By event I refer to the reporting of a particular change of state, or as Mieke Bal rightly demarcated "the transition from one state to another state, caused or experienced by actors" (1997: 182). Hence I separated three sorts of events: collective events, life-course events and biographical events. For collective or historical events, I follow Bearman and Stovel who regard them as *macro-level elements* which "occur outside the author's local world" (2000:83). For instance, coups d'état, the hyperinflation of 1989 in Argentina as well as the student movement of 2011 in Chile were classified as historical events. Bearman and Stovel's *local-event elements* are divided – following Corsten (2001:40) – into biographical *contingent* events (e.g. diseases, relatives' deaths, sexual stories and so on) and life-course *normal* events (e.g. school-university enrolment, work trajectory, weddings, among others). Collective events were mentioned 1,659 times, biographical ones 1,144 times and life-course events were coded 1,407 times.

A second macro coding refers to all the stories circulating about grandparents, parents and children. I called this coding group *genealogical events*. These included stories about family origins, migration or some particular macro events supposedly recounted by their forebears (in those cases I codified the event twice: as a collective event and as a genealogical event). Within the adult cohort, children stories occupy a considerable space for those married and with children. One story of becoming a grandmother and one of becoming a young mother appear in the Chilean adult and young cohort groups, respectively. These events amounted to a total of 1,304 codifications.

A third coding encloses all images of future times, asked particularly at the end of the interviews. A simple division between positive, neutral and negative perceptions ordered these codes. One hundred and thirteen codifications were classified under this code.

A fourth coding included the evaluative codes employed when people recounted private or public events (cognition in Bearman and Stovel's terms). At this point, following Koselleck's conceptualizing of basic counter-concepts (see Åkerstrøm 2003, also Forchtner and Kølvraa 2012), I codified these evaluative elements according to a triple set of binary evaluative codes: temporal (before/after), spatial (inner/outer) and moral (good/bad). The underlying idea was to take these three dimensions into account as internal discursive modifiers (local and temporal deixis as well as positive and negative attributions) in which storytellers draw on different markers as identity boundaries. These evaluate codes normally emerge intertwined (e.g. 'So, I believe, that every *time in the past* was *better*' [temporal-moral] or '*Afterwards*, *our* generation felt *disillusioned*' [temporal-spatial-moral]). In total, 3,968 sentences were codified under these three evaluative codes.

A final macro coding corresponds to the group of *memory supports* employed by the interviewees in order to revisit the past. In this case I considered mentions of books, films, memory sites, newspapers, conversations, mourning rituals, photographs, songs or similar as tools/supports to approach the narratives of difficult pasts. Particularly, drawing on Aleida Assmann's (2006:33) framework, I distinguished three interconnected memory supports: cognitive (individual emotions concerning past experiences), communicative (conversational practices and communicative

media) and cultural supports (written texts, images, music, rituals and memory sites). Memory supports were mentioned 1,252 times.

A detailed list of the codifications crossed by every age cohort is presented in the following chart (Table 4):

Table 4
Number of codifications for each city and cohort

	Buenos Aires 1970	Santiago 1970	Buenos Aires 1990	Santiago 1990	TOTAL
Collective Events	394	247	509	509	1,659
Biographical Events	220	186	356	382	1,144
Life-course Events	399	317	315	376	1,407
Genealogical Events	291	245	413	355	1,304
Future Events	25	21	33	34	113
Evaluative Codes	786	712	1.160	1.310	3,968
Memory Supports	248	227	350	427	1,252
TOTAL	2,363	1,955	3,136	3,393	10,847

2.2.2 Matching and Casing

Codification helped to reduce complexity and was necessary due to the heterogeneous and extensive narrative data. The next procedure similarly aimed at ordering and organizing the thousands of events mentioned. Working at the level of age cohorts, I started by matching life-course sequences and collective events. This simple chronological ordering of both sorts of events showed, firstly, which events were frequently mentioned as relevant and, secondly, what kinds of collective events drew more attention to particular age settings (childhood, early adolescence, secondary school period and so forth). The matching took place mainly at the cohort level (and not only at the biographical level) in order to prefigure forms of generational event sequences. In addition, by disregarding, not mentioning or emphasizing some events, processes of selection were even more evident.

This process of matching is somewhat similar to quantitative approaches to generational memories (e.g. Schuman and Scott 1989). Yet, in this case, it is noteworthy that the matching of 'real events' with 'narrated events' does not matter (a different narrative approach is found in Labov 2013 and Rosenthal 1993). Rather, as Alejandro Portelli points out: "the real and significant historical fact which these narratives highlight is the memory itself" (1991: 26) and "therefore … [oral history] tells us less about events than about their meaning" (1991: 50). The next components of my analytical framework addressed precisely the process of meaning attribution.

This process involved a search for the 'narrative beginnings and endings' of each age cohort. Following Bearman et al. (1999), I draw on the operation of 'casing' narratives. According to the authors, "[C]asing is a pre-requisite for meaning: only when we can provide a beginning and an end to a sequence of interrelated events can we understand the meaning of an event within the sequence and, by extension, the meaning of an event sequence as a whole" (1999: 502). Thus I initially considered the settings of some older collective events as 'historical boundaries' from which people started narrating. These events could take place before their births since they served as time references via which they could localize and allocate their own life stories as 'stemming from'. For example, stories of family migration (from Europe to Latin America, from the country to the city), or political events such as coups d'état or the recovery of democracy, as well as economic events such as hyperinflation, functioned as historical boundaries.

The allocation of these events was not necessarily the beginning of an interview. Still, there were many cases in which the start of an interview corresponded to some collective event in the past. For instance, the attack against the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association in 1994 featured at the beginning of life stories of two young Jewish Argentine respondents. Nobody else started with or mentioned this event. For both respondents the attack marks a beginning in their biographical memories and also helps to develop a sense of belonging. The process of 'casing the end' of their life stories was usually allocated as the present time of the interview.

2.2.3 Connectivity and turning points

By coding, matching and casing I obtained initial insights into the events selected within each age cohort and their intra-differentiations. The next procedure entailed looking for consequential sequences within each age cohort. Here, I focused on how some events are more salient in terms of achieving connectivity and narrative coherence. As Franzosi et al. remark, "some actions and events play a greater role than others in altering a narrative situation; they are consequential rather than simply sequential" (Franzosi et al. 2012: 6). Andrew Abbott (2001) has called these events 'turning points', episodes in which the direction of the story (or plot direction) evolves. Here, I especially looked at how these turning points have effects at the biographical and collective levels. The turning point became even more salient when it produced what Jerome Bruner calls "coherence by contemporaneity: the belief that things happening at the same time must be connected" (1991:19).

2.2.4 Narrative and linguistic apparatus

The formal procedures already mentioned came together with a close reading of particular selected macro events. At this point, I analyzed 'how' and 'why' these events were narrated by means of the linguistic process of meaning attribution. At this level, a more specific structural narrative analysis began. In this line of enquiry four aspects were relevant.

On the one hand, events recounted normally contained a group of narrative elements (following classical narratology: Bal 1997, Chatman 1978, Toolan 2001). Mostly, I concentrated on a) settings, b) characters and c) evaluative clauses. Event settings involve crucial insights into meaning attribution; as Bal claims: "the subdivision of locations into groups is a manner of gaining insight into the relations between elements. A contrast between inside and outside is often relevant, where inside may carry the suggestion of protection, and outside that of danger" (Bal: 1997: 215). A setting or location might include not only domestic, local, national or transnational contexts in which events happened, but also the place in which storytellers experienced events. For instance, in the case of the Argentine older group, the Malvinas/Falklands War took place mainly in primary schools or at home (hearing

the radio and watching TV with the family), instead of the public street (the great wave of public mobilization supporting the conflict).

Characters are crucial components of stories (Jacobs 1996, Jacobs & Sobieraj 2007, Viehöver 2011). Here it is important to distinguish between the main formal characters of a story, e.g. the story's central protagonists (heroes) or antagonists (villains) as well as secondary helpers or comic personifications. In addition, it is relevant to differentiate specific references to collective/individual actors. The role occupied by the storyteller as a passive or active character in an event is also relevant to the process of meaning attribution.

At a more sociolinguistic level, the reported events generally contained some evaluative clause through which meaning was endowed. This component has been intensively examined by William Labov (1972: 368, 1997: 4–5, 2013: 30–32) who states that "evaluative clauses are concentrated in an evaluation section, suspending the action before a critical event, and establishing that event as the point of the narrative" (1997: 4). Here, the set of three evaluative codes (temporal, local and moral) was useful to enquire into different aspects of evaluative clauses. For instance, nominating a generation as the 'old wicked generation' instead of, e.g., the 'new progressive generation' does make an obvious difference. Crucially, the specific examination of moral codes points to what Alexander (2003), Jacobs (1996) and Smith (2005) refer to as moral evaluations and symbolic codes interwoven with narrative structures (see Section 1.4, also Viehöver 2011).

A close reading of these main features of the recounted stories ran in parallel to the examination of the 'linguistic apparatus' within event reports (Toolan 2001: 221-230). When describing settings or characters, or in the formulation of evaluative clauses, particular discursive mechanisms such as passivation and nominalization became fundamental (see the methodical intersection between narrative and discourse analysis in Forchtner and Kølvraa 2012 and Franzosi et al. 2012). The use of metaphors and other rhetorical figures (esp. hyperbolization) are also linguistic means through which discursive strategies are realised and, consequently, evaluations transmitted (See a selection of such discursive macro-strategies in Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 95).

2.2.5 Narrative Templates and Modes of Emplotment

The final procedure involved examining two forms of macro narrative structures: narrative templates and modes of emplotment. Through these two aspects, narratives and linguistic apparatuses are linked to the elaboration of narrative coherence. These– together with evaluative binary codes – are the most macro-related aspects of narrative theory.

A substantial proportion of the stories recounted drew on public interpretations of past events, i.e. forms of collective remembering (e.g. A. Assmann 2006a, Halbwachs 1952, Olick 1999, Wertsch 2002). These interpretations were normally contested and conflicting; however, there is usually a more canonical narrative which controls – more or less successfully – the current meaning and framing of past events. Drawing on James Wertsch's (2002, 2008) notion of 'schematic narrative templates', I would suggest that most stories are characterized by typical forms of plotting (beginning, middle, end), characters and moral evaluations via these narrative templates. Thereby, people can organize biographical experiences, media reports, family transmissions, historical sources and anecdotes in a more structured way.

Not all the events reported present such patterning. Some events were barely mentioned; they function rather as a form of narrative orientation or focalization. Additionally, people can employ contesting and contradictory templates when reporting the same events in different parts of an interview. Still, some templates seem to be more robust than others since they provide more structured historical sequences, complete repertories of characters and clear evaluative clauses. Conversely, some templates, which lack historical focalization, emphasize only moral or existential attributions (for example, see below the differences between the Argentine and Chilean narrative accounts of their respective dictatorships).

Narrative templates can evolve over time and therefore possess some form of historicity. In addition, they can be generalizable for reporting different events. As Wertsch claims: "I am concerned with the notion that a generalized narrative form may underlie a range of narratives in a cultural tradition. This changes the focus from analyzing a list of specific narratives to analyzing an underlying pattern that is instantiated in many of them" (2002: 61).

As I will show later, narrative templates might vary according to class, gender, political tradition and national constellation, all collective attempts at controlling narrative boundaries (Eder 2009, Harrison White 2008). At this more general level, I will highlight and compare – in every generational site – social differences by marking age, class, gender and national narrative forms.

By analyzing narrative templates I was able to recover the memory supports mentioned (films, books, images, memorials and rituals, amongst others). These different media were useful to explain certain symbolical conflicts, catchwords, recurrent expressions or 'figures of memories' (*Erinnerungsfiguren*, J. Assmann 1992:37-38). For every macro event recurrently mentioned in life stories, I offered some academic literature from Latin American cultural or historical sociology as a general reference. Still, the reader will never hear about an 'objective history' vs a 'subjective life story'. The following chapters present neither 'history'– *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* – nor the interpretations put forward by intellectuals, historians and sociologists. The chapters are constructed exclusively around the narrative templates contained in my interviewees' life stories. The academic material will merely be useful to inform the background and development of certain narrative patterns. Above all, the literature about the processes of coming to terms with dictatorship will be defining for understanding the construction and struggle over meaning attribution to these difficult pasts.

By looking for connectivity, coherence and narrative templates are basically an attempt to understand how events are 'emplotted'. Hayden White defines a plot as "a structure of relationships by which the events contained in the account are endowed with a meaning by being identified as part of an integrated whole" (Hayden White 1980:13). Ricœur similarly points out that the "notion of events made into story through the plot immediately suggests that a story is not bound to a merely chronological order of events (…) the plot construes significant wholes out of scattered events" (1991b:106). By drawing on the concept of plot, every chapter will summarize a predominant 'mode of emplotment'. That is, the chapters will not only inform to what extent some events are more important than others, their specific forms of meaning attribution and narrative pattern, they will end up by presenting some macro form in which historical and biographical events are 'grasped together' within each age group. I have already claimed that particular identity, moral

temporal boundaries are involved in these macro plots (see above 1.4, and Eder 2006, Lamont 1992, 2000, Somers 1994).

These modes of emplotment are an analytical outcome in which life stories and different collective templates work together within every generational site. Certainly, multiple plots might be observed within each age cohort but I concentrated on those that are more revealing in terms of understanding the sharing of generational stories that circulate. The identification of modes of emplotment is based on the literature of plot lines (Gergen 1988 and Zerubavel 2003) and cultural genres (Alexander 2003, Bruner 2004, Fryre 1957, Jacobs 1996, Smith 2005). The examination of plot lines takes into consideration the development of a plot over time (progressive, regressive, rise-and-fall narratives), whereas cultural genre helps to identify the sorting of typical narrative emplotments, such as comedy, tragedy, romance and satire, amongst others. Chapter Seven will elaborate the relationship between these modes of emplotment.

The next four chapters are the result of these analytical procedures. Every chapter is organized chronologically, starting from 'historical boundaries', continuing with childhood stories, the formative years, until the adult period (at least for the two older age cohorts). That diachronic ordering might facilitate readers' understanding of these life stories. The chapters emphasize the turning points and social memories of every generational site and illustrate the matching between biographical and historical events. Yet, the attention is primarily on the narrative templates and meaning attributions bestowed on reported events. Crucially, every chapter ends by presenting a particular mode of emplotment, which I will compare in the final chapter.

Chapter 3

Buenos Aires, 1965-1974: Sequences of (dis)illusion and nostalgic/comedy plots

About a decade ago, when describing how British activists connect their biographical stories with the broader political situation, Molly Andrews stated that "although the life stories were clearly distinct, taken together there was, at the same time, a sense in which they constituted one collective story" (2007: 52). Although this sort of connectivity might be key, Andrews' research concentrated on leftist activists, the stories discussed in what follows do not necessarily share this common frame. I focus on the narration of ordinary people who only share being born during the same period and in a similar geographical space. This chapter recounts the events experienced by people born in the province of Buenos Aires between 1965 and 1974. The authors of these stories come from different socio-economic contexts of Buenos Aires and different political traditions.

The chapter has a dual structure. On the one hand, events and periods are presented diachronically (from grandparents' stories until the present time). The underlying idea is not only to match interviewees' life courses and the most reported collective events, but also to understand the meanings attributed to these episodes. After all, the process of meaning attribution is affected by both the individual's biographical recollections as well as collective templates anchored in different memory supports, such as bodily emotions, family dialogues, media reportage, films or public rituals. On the other hand, the chapter introduces two modes of emplotment, although these will only become fully visible at the end. The first plot type is that of nostalgia, a story of decadence in which the past is represented as a mythical order, while the present is turned into a traumatic state of insecurity. The second plot type is that of comedy in which the past is represented as difficult (Dictatorship-Malvinas-Neoliberalism) while the present is viewed with an optimism outlook (a happy ending). While the diachronic route reinforces the importance of formative years for generational memories – a critical period of civil participation during the recovery of democracy – the notion of narrative plots illustrates two modes of grasping the past and future expectations.

3.1 Historical Boundaries: Peron's death and migrant stories

Generational narratives require and produce historical boundaries. Such boundaries do not necessarily denote some form of closure. In contrast, emblematic events and difficult pasts are constantly transmitted from older generations. However, in order to understand how 'former collective events' influence (or do not) present generational narratives, we need, firstly, to delineate the proper generational site in which such stories circulate. In this sense, let me start by relating memories of a particular event through which this Argentine age-group might initially be distinguished from former ones.

"I remember (…) For example, yes, the day of Perón's death had an impact on me … I had just returned to Argentina, because we lived in Spain (…) and I remember that a group of boys, my schoolmates, did a victory lap (vuelta olímpica) (…) Something that I didn't really understand (…) I mean, as a celebration – so to speak – at school for Perón's death." (Antonia, 1966)

"I was a boy (…) Perón's death was in '74, on July 1st – I believe – 1974, because (Perón) returned in '73 (…) First I didn't understand what death was (…) it's weird to explain this to you (…) Besides, I would like to explain this to you as if I was a child … I was very surprised that people were so sad (…) God was gone! It was like God, there He is! there He is! It was like God (…) God did not exist anymore, what do we do? (laughs)." (Mario, 1966)

For Antonia, who attended a private, bilingual English/Spanish school, one of the first collective events mentioned – General Perón's death –impinged upon a mythical celebration – a lap of honour. Conversely, for Mario, the son of a modest newspaper seller and Peronist, this death retained an aura of tragedy: the death of God. Perón's death, described as both 'triumph and trauma', forms part of the multiple oppositions found in Argentine stories. Certainly, Perón – and the Peronist-anti-Peronist division – is relevant in most of my stories.

Peronists claims that the first government of Perón and his second wife Evita (1946-1952) was the beginning of social justice in Argentina; and since then, Peronism stands for the workers' will, i.e. – *pars pro toto* – the national will. In opposition,

according to the anti-Peronist view, Perón's government was a form of covert fascism, and Peronism's goals are nothing more than a form of populist state control.

Peronism and anti-Peronism have been transmitted from older generations as a key discursive opposition. Nowadays, this opposition has been renewed under the governments of Néstor Kirchner and his wife Cristina Fernández. The salient reference to this opposition (or the mere fact of remembering Perón's death) is thus linked to the present political culture (see 3.8 below, and particularly 5.5).[26]

Certainly, my respondents did not have any personal memories of the Perón era. Antonia and Mario, my oldest interviewees, only recollected Perón's death as a mythical event. Yet, the latter acts as an initial 'time marker', thereby 'casing' (Berman et al. 1999) this age group's first stories. Former collective events, such as Perón's first government, Perón's exile, various authoritarian regimes in response to Peronism (e.g. Aramburu 1955-1958; Guido 1962-1963; Onganía 1966-1970) and Perón's return in 1973 (the tragedy of Ezeiza) were all national events that were commented on, though not experienced. Still, Perón's death as both 'triumph and trauma' (Giesen 2004b) is symptomatic of a period of divided memories which frame the birth of this age cohort.

There are other historical boundaries delineated by family memories. For example, one central mythical source of Argentine stories is overseas immigration by grandparents and parents. Argentina, from the middle of the 19th century onwards, experienced successive waves of mostly European immigration, reaching 27% of the population in 1914 (Bjerg 2009:28). Such waves – albeit irregular – did not stop until the first half of the next century. As such, I frequently interviewed people with an Italian, Spanish or German background. Of course, there were also people coming from inner rural zones and neighbouring countries, such as Bolivia and Paraguay (esp. the poorest respondents) or grandparents living for 'centuries' in Buenos Aires (esp. the richest respondents). Non-immigrants are likely to form the majority of the population. However, and tellingly, as soon as there was just one European immigrant entering the family, the latter's memory will connect their life story to the grand narrative of Argentina as a 'country of European immigrants'.

[26] The literature on Peronism is inexhaustible. For a reasonable understanding of its historical and cultural dimensions see: James (1988), Laclau (2005), Murmis and Portantiero (2012), Ostiguy (2009), Romero (2012), Sigal and Verón (2003) and Torres and De Riz (1991).

Clear narrative templates were found for these most distant pasts. One plain example is offered by stories about the Second World War. The innocent Italian, the terrible German and the good American are nicely narrated by Francisca when recounting her Italian father's memories:

"In his house, in particular, a bomb fell, went through the roof but it didn't explode. That is why he was alive … These sorts of things resemble a movie but, well, they were real (laughs). Or, when, for instance, when the Germans arrived, they ate all the animals (…) killed the small pigs, they ate all the animals (laughs). It was terrible because there was nothing left for them! Nothing! Afterwards, when the Americans came, they brought chocolate. And he remembered, because he was a child, that the first time that he tried chocolate was the chocolate brought by the Americans." (Francisca, 1970)

The first government of Perón and the waves of European immigrants provide sources for the two main national stories. They construct a historical site in which family stories are linked with national (mythical) pasts. By describing their fathers as Peronist/anti-Peronist or their grandmothers as first-generation immigrants, they establish recurring identity markers. These pasts remain family and national sources that foster a collective bond. However, and simultaneously, their stories stress that they were born after these events and thus they are neither immigrants nor have any experienced of the rise and fall of Perón. As such, these events delineate historical boundaries. Still, when comparing this with how 11 September 1973 in Santiago de Chile establishes a sharp difference between 'before and after' (i.e. the 'previous' period becoming almost inaccessible), these Argentine boundaries appear much 'softer'. 'Soft borders' (Eder 2006), temporally speaking, draw a temporal division indeed (before/after) yet offer bridges to access the past.

3.2 Childhood memories: The coup d'état at home and in primary school

Perón's death was recounted by my two oldest respondents within the frame of childhood memories. For them the event seems difficult to understand. For Mario, Peron's death was connected to his first thoughts about death. For Antonia, the event was mostly linked to her first years in Argentina after living abroad. Childhood memories of critical events sometimes seem to 'screen memories'. Still,

although they remain somewhat obscure and fuzzy, they are noticeably framed by narrative templates and group memories.

In the context of such blurred memories, one of the most critical Argentine political events was recalled. In the early morning of 24 March 1976, a coup d'état threw out the government of Maria Estela Martinez de Perón (better known as Isabel Perón, the general's third wife). The military junta behind it included all three branches of the armed forces: Army, Navy and Air Force. During the seventies, Argentina saw a climax of violence due to the strong Cold War polarization between radical left-wing guerrillas and radical right-wing groups. The so-called 'process of national reorganization' was supported by conservative powers: a great part of the business class, the media and the Catholic Church. It is rightly considered as one of the more violent and disruptive Argentine dictatorships. The military junta left behind a great number of victims and a widespread feeling of terror among their relatives provoked by systematic clandestine practices of kidnapping, torture, child abductions and murders, including throwing people out of planes into the sea.[27]

For my respondents, such a dictatorship was primarily associated with common life-course spaces of childhood: home and primary school. Both settings entail particular features in terms of remembering dictatorship. To begin with, *home* was normally described as a space of communicative silence (*kommunikatives Beschweigen*)[28] concerning what was occurring in Argentina. The interviewees consistently maintained that politics was hardly discussed. As Marcelo commented:

"We felt it [the dictatorship] as something tough when we were boys, it was (…) There was <u>something that you felt</u> whenever your parents (…) whenever you got close to the topic, they got nervous. It was <u>this thing</u>, you know. That nobody wanted to speak about it." (Marcelo, 1968)

It has regularly been stated that broad sections of the Argentine population 'didn't want to know' what was happening (Novaro and Palermo 2002:123-149). Yet, 'looking the other way' coalesces with fear of military persecution.[29] Indeed, silence

[27] For just one of thousands of historical – academic – accounts see the excellent work by Novaro and Palermo (2003). For a lucid discussion on memories of the Argentinean dictatorship see Vezzetti (2002). For a long history of Argentine traumatic violence, see Robben (2005b).
[28] The term was introduced by Herman Lübbe, though I take it from A. Assmann (2013:42).
[29] For such a 'culture of fear' see Corradi et al. (1992) and O'Donnell (1983a, 1983b).

as a requirement was a particular experience remembered: *'You should not repeat what the adults said'* or *'You should not say outside what you heard within the family.'* For some respondents, such silence was directly connected to their parents' fear of being involved in politics. Those parents opposing the military regime might have had reason to fear children repeating at school what they had discussed only amongst their closest friends.

Under the orders of the military junta, schools were transformed into places of surveillance. Some respondents remembered books on civic education which encouraged the reporting of any signs of anarchism or Marxism amongst parents, friends, teachers, neighbours and so on. Indeed, for those coming from a middle-class background, school was vividly remembered as a military barracks. In addition to the atmosphere of control and silence, the military focus on controlling physical aspects (hair) as well as clothes (school uniforms) was engraved in their memories. As Julio recollected:

"It was a very militarized school, where everyone had to dress rigorously in uniform, with short hair, with (…) I mean, where everything that stood out was a matter of (…) – so to speak – of punishment." (Julio, 1967)

Further, as Rosario remembered, primary school was characterised by strong nationalism. She was proud of having been a flag-bearer in multiple national commemorations while not mentioning the militarized atmosphere of those times. She preferred to remember such times as a beautiful period. Indeed, although all my interviewers attended – though differently– such militarized primary schools, this social site conveys a central rift in terms of generational memory. Most of those coming from upper-middle and low social contexts remembered primary school merely as a place of 'friendship', 'harmony', 'good education' and 'fabulous times'. As a positive evaluative code (beautiful past/ childhood/ school), this account operates by drawing a hard boundary between past and present. Indeed, terms such as 'individualism', 'insecurity', 'bad public schools' and 'ugly times' prevail when describing the present. To be sure, this assessment is linked to the feelings of insecurity which emerged during the nineties and the nostalgic mode of emplotment of certain groups (see 3.7 below).

Both modes of evoking school (military barracks/ beautiful childhood) are linked to family memories. For my respondents, the authorized voice to speak about those

times comes from relatives' experiences ('my mother saw', 'my father commented', 'my brother participated', or 'none of them knew anything'). There are some blurred biographical memories of bomb explosions, soldiers in the streets, a prohibition to leave home or some distant neighbour who lost a relative ('disappeared' is a trope to indicate those victims kidnapped, tortured and murdered by the military). Yet, all the memories are mixed with parents' or relatives' stories. For instance, Marta remembered her father explaining:

"Well, dad always remembers this part of (…) that he never (…) He says that (…) Around dad's house – I mean our house – there was always trouble, problems, but we were – never touched! Dad said: "They knew where they had to go", the montoneros (RF: the leftist Peronist youth movement persecuted by the dictatorship), *all these ugly issues (…) He said: "They met right there on the corner. We – me and your mother – watched through the window. The military police came, 'they were picked up',[30] heads fell (volaban cabezas), but we were never touched!" (Marta, 1971)*

Such indirect reporting is quite informative. The victims (*montoneros*) are firstly predicated through a moral-aesthetic term ('ugly'). Secondly, military forces were sometimes simply omitted by employing a passive voice, e.g. *we were never touched*.[31] Yet, it is clear that the military police are revealed as quite professional in distinguishing good and bad suspects (*they knew where they had to go*). In this sense, Marta repeats her father's story which corresponds to the dictatorship's passive or active adherents. According to Marta, her father – a German immigrant – hardly talked about those times. Neither did he speak about his former times in Germany (the Second World War). Marta's father, according to her story, preferred hard work and to remain silent (although a very communicative silence). Finally, she seemed to be very convinced (and proud) of her family's standing. Nonetheless, Marta expressed her conviction at the end of the interview that all the trials against the military perpetrators are appropriate:

[30] 'They were picked up or taken away (lit.: they were lifted up, *se los levantaban*) is a recurrent expression of those times to indicate the horror of kidnapping. The emphasis on the passive voice 'se' is part of the legacy of the communicative silence.

[31] Carassai (2014) reports the use of similar terms when describing how older people frame this period. Rosa's father account probably coincides in the terms: "They never stopped me, I never had problems, absolutely, never, nobody" (Carassai 2014:164). Tellingly, the narrative template still circulates as a middle-class testimony.

"I find it good that they go jail – because of what I have heard – and what they (the government) have done, actually, I find it really perfect. You cannot take someone's life in this way, and even less, take a child away from his or her mother. I find that abhorrent. It (…) it is very ugly, horrible! I find (the imprisonment) perfect." (Marta, 1971)

There is no contradiction for Marta in describing this. She only repeated and justified two stories: on the one hand, her father's story about the (justified) persecutions of the (ugly) leftist Peronists; on the other, the agreement to judge all perpetrators who committed (ugly) crimes against women and children (more 'innocent and sacred' victims). Present recollections are impinged upon by processes of understanding state violence. Argentina is well known as a country in which vigorous human rights movements have claimed measures of 'truth and justice', and a process of justice supported by the state has taken place over the last thirty years (albeit irregularly). Both human rights organizations and, especially, current state policy have made an important contribution to modern trends of transnational justice (Sikkink and Booth Walling 2006). However, these public accounts are also framed within the context of other group memories, a mix which sometimes results in, as in Marta's statements, a somewhat odd and even contradictory outcome.

Marta's ambiguities refer to innumerable stories from her childhood. Most participants – at least from the middle classes – gave a complex and detailed historical portrayal: the Cold War polarization of the 1960s and the role played by the generation that grew up in this context; the ambiguous role of Perón in the seventies; the climax of violence during Isabel's government; the performance of extreme right civilian groups (the triple AAA – the Argentine Anti-communist Alliance) under Isabel's government; the unjustified use of deadly violence against the left-wing movement; and the systematic extermination of left-wing 'enemies' which resulted in 15,000 – 30,000 victims[32]. There are multiple differences, for example, in terms of the vocabulary employed which ranges from the conservative name *the process*, through the old concept of *dirty war*, to the commonest *military regime/government* and *dictatorship* terms as well as the newest *genocide* one (cf. Robben 2012). Other participants drew attention to the military economic project – the development of neo-liberalism – as a crucial raison d'être of the dictatorship. Yet,

[32] The number is contentious as well as symbolic. Some official reports refer to 10000 - 15000 victims. Yet, the human right organizations neglect such minimal cipher, claiming for the double of victims.

such explanations were developed during their youth or adult life. A crucial element evoked by their childhood was, instead, mixed feelings of fear, ignorance, not knowing, silence and negation regarding what was occurring in the country.

3.3 Intermezzo: World Cup 1978

One particular event that was held during these years was often mentioned: the 1978 FIFA World Cup. Argentina organized and won this football championship and some interviewees – the more nationalistic ones – vividly recalled the final against the Netherlands and how they banged pots to celebrate the triumph.[33] It is well known that football is – as my interviewee Francisca said – *'for the Argentine almost a part of their lives'*. Yet, the most lasting impression was of Argentine public enthusiasm in the schools and streets. Two male reports are informative:

"All of a sudden, one day, the teacher brought a portable television and instead of giving a history lesson we watched the matches. But not only Argentine ones, we watched the matches of all those who might play against Argentina. It was such a crazy thing! Until today I don't like football. I think it is connected to (…) all of this." (Marcelo, 1968)

"The other was the World Cup that took place in Argentina, it was a football cup – so to say – that I didn't understand (…) I had older brothers, adolescents, who liked sports and, therefore, it was a sport event for us. But, it was a considerable burden (…) It was one of the few things that I remembered brought about a mobilization, a popular mobilization (…) not a demonstration in the sense of a march (…) but rather like a celebration. So, in the course of my childhood (…) all through primary school, from 73' to 79', there were no public demonstrations, they did not exist. In '78 a demonstration emerged (…) it was, you know, something totally different, all the people on the streets, celebrations, everyone." (Julio, 1967)

Julio's account of those days is framed by his incapacity to understand the fervour surrounding the championship. For sure, in a context of widespread silence and discipline in schools, the abrupt emergence of public enthusiasm might have been surprising. However, Julio was not only astonished by such public fervour, he also recounted the odd fact that many cars were sporting the national flag and carrying

[33] The remembering of pot banging was directly related to current demonstrations. Indeed, during the period of my fieldwork, right-antiperonist-upper-middle-class protests against Cristina Fernandez's government were taking place.

the slogan: 'we Argentines are human and right'. He remembered even a vague uneasiness concerning his family:

"And I didn't understand (…) because at home it was mentioned that (…) well, we – the Argentine – are neither not so much 'right' nor so 'human'. This was what was said at home. And I didn't understand it well, and it even bothered me because I saw this as a matter of patriotism." (Julio, 1967)

Years later Julio realized that the aforementioned campaign (*human and right*) was promoted by the dictatorship thereby neglecting accusations of crimes against human rights. Different international institutions were already accusing the regime of heinous crimes and the mothers of 'the disappeared' made weekly public appearances around 'May square' in order to demand information about their relatives' whereabouts. Yet, the campaign was quite successful, and due to the enthusiasm shown by the Argentine population, the military junta authorized the Human Rights Inter-American Commission to visit the country (Novaro and Palermo 2003: 159-168). The next year, after publishing the commission's report about the crimes of the dictatorship, the military junta realized the false step it had taken. All in all, within the frame of childhood memories, my respondents were left with the impression that many cars were carrying flags and slogans, and that it was eventually a matter of patriotism to support this campaign.

There are also some media memories around the soccer event. For Francisca, the World Cup included a special moment when his father bought their first colour television. Francisca mentioned that she did not have images of the dictatorship before such a purchase, just her father's account. Marcelo also recollected that all the boys bought themselves a radio to listen to the matches. These media memories are worth taking into account, given the fact that in the course of the Malvinas/ Falklands War, a wave of critical communication begun.

3.4 Malvinas/Falklands War and the sacred young soldiers

According to Oddone and Lynch (2008:134), based on a quantitative survey, Raúl Alfonsín´s democratic government (1983-1989) and the Malvinas/Falklands War (1982) are the most remembered events of this age cohort in Argentina. All my respondents confirmed the relevance of these events. As Schumann and Scott (1989)

demonstrated, the events that occur during adolescence and youth ('formative years' or 'impressionable years') are the most strongly remembered ones. However, it is still necessary to explain the relationship between the former events as narrated (childhood memories of dictatorship) and the relationship between the two events (the Malvinas and Alfonsín's government). Even more important is the need to cast light on the meaning attributed to the war as a significant event.

The Malvinas/Falklands represents a central constituent of the national Argentine memory (Guber 2001, Lorenz 2006). Occupied by Britain in 1832-1833, the group of islands became for the Argentines a symbol of unity during the twentieth century. In contrast to the multiple internal conflicts characterising Argentine political history, the Malvinas remain a place of consensus for political elites. Similar to Guber's interpretation (2001), I argue that it is possible to sustain that the Malvinas stood for unique, external and sacral territory where all the multiple, internal and profane conflicts dissolved. Although it is often said that the Malvinas are associated with dictatorship (i.e. polluted), the image of a heroic fight against a colonial power lingers on. This sacral image is reinforced in squares, monuments, schools, the media and countless slogans on streets and highways ('*Las Malvinas Son Argentinas*'; The Falklands Are Argentinean).

For my respondents, the Malvinas were first experienced in terms of national euphoria. Similar to the 1978 football World Cup, people again invaded the streets to support the military project. For some of the men, the euphoria was transformed into a personal desire: *"I wanted to be a pilot,"* remembered Mario. This kind of enchantment involved almost the entire population: a collective participation to overcome a super-evil foe: the British.

Whereas the first years of the dictatorship were experienced at home and in primary school, for my respondents the Malvinas War was experienced largely in the streets and via the media. A symbolic place was evidently *Plaza de Mayo* – literally May Square. One of the most important memory sites of Buenos Aires (Sigal 2006), situated at the heart of the capital and in front of the government palace (*Casa Rosada*), *Plaza de Mayo* has seen multiple milestones in Argentine national history: patriotic commemorations of independence, the popular revolt of 17 October 1945 when Perón was proclaimed absolute leader by the working class, and the weekly parades of the *desaparecidos'* mothers. All those historical events were mentioned

randomly during the interviews. Biographically recounted was the day on which a public demonstration in support of the war took place in the square. Yet, as Francisca recollected, another sort of mobilization, in the same square, had occurred days before the war began. The sequence is particularly odd, as Francisca recognized:

"A determined and massive protest against the government had taken place. There was repression and so on (…) my father was there, of course (laughs) (…) and I also remembered that, about that day (…) no longer, I don't know, not even a week passed, 15 days, and the war began. And, in the same square in which a mass demonstration against dictatorship took place, a mass demonstration was staged in, this time in support of (…) I don't know how to call it (…) 'Let's go to recover the Malvinas and be victorious.' You know, something quite crazy." (Francisca, 1970)

Even though Francisca's father was only present at the demonstration against the dictatorship, it is reported that some people attended both protests. Indeed, diverse exiled politicians supported the campaign to recover the Malvinas (see Lorenz 2006:41-59). Such massive popular fervour was strongly encouraged by the media. All the respondents vividly remembered following the war via the TV news and the press. Rosario recollected – like a flashbulb memory – the place and time when the occupation of the Malvinas by Argentinean forces was announced. Marcelo remembered his schoolmates hearing radio news about the attack on the warship *Belgrano* (a turning point in the conflict) while they queued at school in order to pray for the sailors.

The role of the media was both crucial and disappointing. As some of the interviewees remembered, many magazines promoted a false image of victory while the military junta, in fact, sent mostly raw recruits against a powerful British force. The result was a disaster and the image of the war was, as Luis graphically and ironically put it, of 'Indians with spears against soldiers with lasers'. The dramatic end to the Malvinas conflict led the military to give up state control and call for free and fair elections.

What might draw one's attention is the shift contained in the Malvinas story. After living a time of quiet 'normality' – without public demonstrations – the city again emerges as a place of enthusiasm and national fervour. Some interviewees remembered participating, with their families, in a crusade to collect funds for the

soldiers. At school, as Marcelo remembered, '*we were all fervent adolescents and it was like an issue of national male chauvinism* (*machismo*)'. Such a period of public euphoria was grasped by those attending public (state) schools. For Julio, who attended the well-known public National School – close to *Plaza de Mayo* – the Malvinas War represents 'a before and an after'. In an interesting passage, he commented on how the national history 'entered' his biography and modified his life course:

"It is a defining event (…) it is a before and an after. What really divides secondary school is not the restoration of democracy but the Malvinas. Only then the popular manifestations started and the end of the dictatorship began. Here the fall of the dictatorship commenced (…) this totally changed my school days. I started to participate in a religious group (…) Then, the Malvinas War (…) So, now that I am saying this, many political historical events entered my life, you know (…) I don't understand why I remember these events more (…) but (…) it was important (silence)." (Julio, 1967)

All such feelings of national illusion – within the frame of dictatorship –suddenly ended when the public realized that the Malvinas campaign was a disaster. As various respondents later understood, the Malvinas was a 'last-ditch effort'[34] of the military junta which was failing in political and economic terms.

Even though all the respondents mentioned the Malvinas, there were some subtle – albeit crucial – differences. For Jorge and Antonia, middle-upper-class respondents, the Malvinas are mostly linked to problems concerning being part of private, English schools. Antonia was mostly affected by the fact that her schoolmates could not collect enough funds as an English school for their graduation trip. They could only afford a 'normal' hotel in Mar del Plata, a seaside resort close to Buenos Aires. The trope of *travelling* recurs frequently in upper-class Argentinean stories recounting young experiences (see Chapter Five for upper-class youths' recollections of the Argentinean crisis in 2001). What is surprising is not the trip itself but rather the fact that collective events are often recounted merely as a disruption of their private story.

For those respondents from the lowest social-class position, the Malvinas/Falklands War seems to be disconnected from the military regime. Twice an alternative explanation was offered instead: the British Navy invaded the group of islands (this

[34] This is a poor translation of the Spanish colloquial expression '*manotazo de ahogado*', which means 'the last futile attempt of the drowned' (lit. drowned last flailing).

fact is indeed true, but it happened 150 years earlier), the Argentine Army was forced to recover them, young conscripts arrived, suffered harsh war conditions and were eventually vanquished. In one of these cases, the story was slightly expanded upon: British forces conquered the Islands thanks to Chilean support (throwing a hateful look at the Chilean interviewer).[35] In neither case was the dictatorship mentioned, not even remembered when I asked, or was simply confused with Alfonsín's government. Alternatively, one of my respondents remembered how, three years later, in 1986, the evil enemy was at least defeated in a football match. Please note the emotive narration of the triumph against England at the 1986 México World Cup:

"Another shocking event was when we scored against the English. Do you get me? That was, I don't know, (they) *killed so many boys* (guachos) *(…) Scoring against the English – Diego* (Maradona)[36] *did it – that was also something I witnessed! I was there. I saw my dad crying, my mother crying, everybody was crying!" (Luis, 1974)*

Luis's use of the word *guacho* (or *huacho* in Chilean) is significant. The word is a key trope in the southern Cone lexicon, stemming from an indigenous Quechua root. Literally, it means an orphan, abandoned by his/her parents (in Chile, 'country of huachos', the word stands merely for the absence of the father, but also refers to bastard children; see Montecino 2007). By using this term, Luis emphasises the character of the sacred victims (young male conscripts) of the Malvinas War. Of course, professional military forces also participated in the Malvinas War; yet, the public image of war victims is mostly linked to young conscripts. Although memories of the Malvinas War are contentious (e.g. heroic act vs. military fake), the sacred 'young' victim is vividly present.

[35] In Chile, only one respondent mentioned the Malvinas/Falklands conflict. He remembered following the war on the news and, of course, supporting the England navy. By the same token, the Chile-Argentina conflict that took place around 1977-1980 - related to the Beagle Channel boundary - was only remembered by an Argentinean who attended a military school.

[36] Needless to say, Maradona's goals have become a myth: the first one was the 'hand of God', and the second one the so-called 'goal of the century'.

3.5 Alfonsín's spring and political activism

Julio's assertion that the Malvinas/Falklands War implied a *'before' and* an *'after'* was largely connected to the new cycle of public mobilizations. After the Malvinas, the military's reputation was at rock-bottom (publicly blamed not only for incompetence, but henceforth also for corruption and multiple atrocities during its dictatorship). The military government could no longer block political participation. After seven years of fear and silence, political parties recovered their standing and visibility in the streets and media. In 1983, after mass campaigns, the Radical Party under the lead of Raul Alfonsín won the election against the Peronist candidate (the first defeat in free and fair elections for Peronism since the 1940s).

Increasing political participation was particularly remembered by those attending secondary school and university. Those times are characterized by the emergence of numerous student councils and different youth organizations. Young people enrolled into political parties such as the Justicialist and Radical Parties (Peronists and Radical youth) as well as a variety of leftist organizations and nationalistic rightist Catholic unions. Decisively, political activism spanned secondary schools and university departments. Marcelo described such a period using a football metaphor:

"*Adopting a posture was parcel and part of being adolescent and young in those days. You cannot say: I am independent nor am I apolitical (…) That is to say, it would be like attending a classic Boca (Juniors)-River (Plate) match and saying: "I come here just for the sport." Of course, not!" (Marcelo, 1968)*

Such political activism is relevant given the correspondence with their formative years. For my respondents living in Buenos Aires, the process of political activism is framed by youthful memories in which the collective historical sequence is matched with the cognitive and social stage of adolescence. Even though the dictatorship might be a more 'traumatic' event in national terms, *their* time began when democracy arrived. Whether the dictatorship and the violence of the past correspond to older generations (and indeed these generations draw a temporal boundary, thereby signalling that *they* really experienced the violence), they locate the narration of *their* lives in the context of the recovery of democracy. An intense feeling of 'being there' escalated with the political environment of democracy, touching on, as newly Marcelo recounted, sexual as well as political spheres:

"So, this is the period during which you discover the world, you accommodate it, a world view is adopted (…) At the same time, Argentina underwent so many changes during '83, from TV to all the media (…) I mean, my political and sexual awakening coincided with a political and sexual liberation. Because before you didn't see boobs anywhere, and from 83', 84' onwards, suddenly every magazine had something and so on; also regarding politics, you know. On the political side, you had a load of lists, political parties, ideas, coalitions, electoral platforms. I read everything during that time." (Marcelo, 1968)

The re-emergence of political activism took place together with new social practices. Not only were the media breaking censorship and authoritarian patterns but, as many respondents reported, forbidden artists or classical protest music (e.g. Leon Gieco, Victor Heredia, Sui Generis) were being intensely listened to. Clothes and hairstyles were no longer subject to authoritarian control.

But experiences of this time do, nevertheless, differ. Rosario was not allowed by her father to attend the national public university precisely due to its widespread political activism; instead, she had to choose a private Catholic college. Antonia had already studied medicine at the public national University of Buenos Aires and recollected negatively the atmosphere there ('very *dirty*, full of slogans'). Furthermore, the four low-class respondents had to abandon secondary school in order to help out at home. Luis and Mario were already working after the economic crisis at the beginning of the 1980s; both families had also suffered from the economic disaster at the end of the dictatorship. There were other more traumatic cases. Luciana, for example, does not have any recollections of the political events of those times (neither of the dictatorship nor of democracy). Rather, she remembered living in a shantytown (*villa*) where her father regularly beat her mother. During her adolescence she run away and lived with her mother and sister in squares or public bathrooms. All her memories centred on such biographical, traumatic events rather than distant political events.

The renewal of political activism is strongly connected to a more general process of coming to terms with the dictatorship. Crucially, even though the dictatorship does not form part of the formative years of this age cohort, the process of collective remembering does, and it leaves an important generational mark. I assume that this fact does not imply a process of unconscious 'post-memory' (cf. Hirsch 1997, 2008, 2012). Rather, by experiencing the *construction* of this 'national trauma', they were

overtly impacted upon by the past's narrativization. That is, the critical conjecture of assessing the military regime provides different evaluative codes and narrative templates which are largely present in their stories. Let me report some of the most important components of this process of coming to terms with the Argentine dictatorship.

Alfonsín's campaign was– in stark contrast to Peronism – characterized by the promise of uncovering and judging crimes against human rights. During the first three years of Alfonsín's government, two significant processes of accounting for the past occurred: a human rights commission (National Commission for the Disappeared – CONADEP) and the trial of commanders-in-chief of the military juntas. Both procedures were unthinkable without a) the weak position of the military hierarchy after the Malvinas, b) Alfonsín's willingness to set up a truth process and seek some kind of justice and c) the strength of human right groups against oblivion (already covering numerous organizations). Both processes were highly contentious, taking into account the ambitions of government, military forces and human right organizations.[37] Still, the commission and trials represent a worldwide innovative step in terms of transitional justice (Nino 1996, Sikkink and Booth Walling 2006, 2007). The truth commission was the first historical case to accomplish its mandate successfully (Krüger 2014; also, for a remarkable analysis of the Commission, see Crenzel 2008).

What is significant to focus on is the public impact of both events. The report of the human rights commission – called *Nunca Más*/ Never Again (or also Sabato's report, following the name of the commission chair) saw ten editions, reaching 270,000 copies by 1985 (Marchesi 2001). At its launch, 70,000 people gathered at *Plaza de Mayo*. The trial of the military junta was followed daily by press and media, even a special weekly newspaper was published (*el diario de la junta*, Feld 2002). In fact, from the very beginning of the democratic period, the media had reported testimonies and the discoveries of mass graves. This 'show of horror' (González Bombal 1995) was intensively followed and discussed in the Argentine public sphere. All these processes altered the communicative frame of the Argentine past,

[37] For different recounts of transitional justice processes in Argentina (literature never-ending) see: Acuña and Smulovitz (1995), Acuña (2006), Aguilar (2007), Barahona de Brito (2001), Crenzel (2008), Fuchs and Nolte (2006), Fuchs (2010), and Jelin (1994, 2007). For Alfonsín's election and government I draw on Novaro (2009, 2011).

provoking a widespread 'breaking of the silence'. The figure of the '*desaparecidos*' and the heinous destiny of victims were publicly discussed thereafter.

'Breaking of the silence' is also part of my respondents' biographical accounts. Francisca acutely recollected the trial and still has copies of the special newspaper (*el diario del juicio*). Other interviewees remembered how tough it was to read the report. Now, given their childhood memories of silence and fear, it is worth wondering how the 'breaking of the silence' was experienced within the family. To be honest, the interviews did not offer sufficient material to sustain a robust explanation. Nevertheless, some points might be enlightening. The first point is somehow randomly mentioned as 'discovering close victims'. Although most people affirmed that, within the family circle, nobody knew anything about the crimes, diverse cases of victims were 'discovered' in the near environment after the end of the dictatorship. It is often commented on that one's mother/father realized that they had worked/studied with people who suffered persecution.

Some cases are striking. Antonia remembered that a brother of her father's colleague was kidnapped. Antonia's father realized that fact only after the dictatorship because his colleague had never spoken about it. Certainly, there were cases where victims' relatives stayed silent (Vezzetti 2002: 52). However, doubts arose when the same interviewee – upper class and right-wing – remembered accurately the cases in which military forces were attacked (the most emblematic memory corresponds to General Cardozo's death: a 'subversive' 18-year-old girl simulated a friendship with the general's daughter in order to plant a bomb under the General's bed). The uncovering of both victims in Antonia's account closely resembles the script of the so-called 'theory of the two demons'.

Such 'theory' used to prevail in Argentina and sustains that the responsibility for violence was twofold: the leftist guerrilla and rightist military forces. They both committed crimes, supported violent practices and polarized Argentine society. As I noted above, Marta's recounts encompass both: the story of the *ugly montonero* rightly persecuted and the evaluation of a fair trial of *ugly* perpetrators. Precisely, such images of double evil were a common template at the beginning of democracy.[38]

[38] This template was promoted by Alfonsín's government, yet it was originated in a previous period. As Vezzetti (2009:61-69) demonstrated, it was fostered during the sixties by some leftist groups which took a stance against the guerrilla's use of violence.

Alfonsín's project was an attempt to reconcile divided memories and construct a new future. The written memory support of such a script is found within the prologue of the human rights commission. Years later, 'the theory of the two demons' would be gradually contested by different human rights organizations – something based on left-guerrilla violence cannot be compared with the systematic and clandestine elimination of left-wing political groups by military forces. Tellingly, the 'theory of two demons' projected an image of Argentine society as a victim of two such evils (Vezzetti 2002: 126-127). Supporters of the campaign 'human and right' during the FIFA World Cup in 1978, and the majority supporting the military campaign in the Malvinas, were not regarded as 'bystanders'.

O'Donnell (1983) showed early on that a section of the ordinary population, at least in Buenos Aires, had probably accepted the military script proclaimed during the dictatorship. Such a script basically drew a line between the past (before 1976), as a context of *sick* violence and public chaos produced by left guerrillas, and the present (after 1976), as a context of *healthy* order and (self-)control brought about by military forces. For instance, Julio recognized that his parents felt quite safe having their children at a military school. What is fascinating is that O'Donnell's repeat interviews conducted after the dictatorship collapsed, showing that the evaluative code (chaos/order) had been abruptly transfigured. It is worth reproducing O'Donnell's description of his 'experiment':

"When the BA (Bureaucratic Authoritarianism) in Argentina was already collapsing, in a rather perverse move – with the pretext that I had lost the transcript of their former interviews and needed their help for reconstructing them – I reinterviewed some of the more depoliticized and acquiescent individuals in our sample. On this second occasion, most of them were full of rage against the BA, the armed forces, its behaviour in the war, and the atrocities it had committed in the country. Furthermore, some of those respondents had again become politically active. All of them 'remembered' what they had actually told us in a way that sharply contrasted with what they had actually told us. They were wrong, but evidently sincere, as they had been sincere before, in telling me, in the reinterviews, that they had always strongly opposed the regime and had never accepted its injunctions. In the first interviews some of those respondents had given distressing responses to our probing concerning the abductions, tortures, and murders that were going on: these where only "rumours" or "exaggerations" and, at any event, "there must be some reason" why some persons were so victimized." (O'Donnell 1999:75)

Such transformations of micro-narratives were indeed accompanied by the media, the human rights report, Alfonsín's government's script and the first popular films about the period (1985: 'La Historia Oficial' and 1986: 'La Noche de los Lápices', both films were repeatedly mentioned by my respondents). Particularly, all of them stressed an image of heinous perpetrators and massacred victims, leaving little space for other forms of accountability. Marta's disapproval of perpetrators, due to their atrocities against *children and women* (sacred victims without political involvement) has as likely reference all these memory supports.

What is relevant here is not the entire discussion on Argentine collective memory, but the impact of the change of the narrative frame on both micro- and macro-levels in order to understand such a generational site. By assuming a rapid transformation of the narrative frame in micro- and macro-contexts, it is possible to assume that within the ordinary family the same change occurred equally fast. In this sense, I affirm that a conflicting process of 'breaking the family silence' barely took place in ordinary family memories. This is why some kind of broad generational acrimony (e.g. the son/daughter accusing the father of some kind of 'conspiracy of silence') was never experienced. In fact, what I found in some particular cases was rather the impression of some sort of 'breaking the illusion of non-knowledge': "We already knew about the victims but you (as a child) didn't realize." Marcelo acutely recalled a family conversation in which this sort of breaking occurred:

"I remember having arguments with uncles in which I said that we didn't know anything, and them replying, "No, we did know." Such a shock. "So you did know?", "Yes, we did". Indeed, I had a relative, a second cousin who was picked up one day (lo levantaron) (...) I found that out when (…) during one of these discussions I said, "But no, no one knew anything" and then this story came out. "How could we not have known about that, if you have a second cousin who was picked up?" (Marcelo, 1968)

The trope of illusion-disillusion often appeared in their stories of childhood and youth. The first time was the 1978 World Cup, lived first as patriotic fervour and later remembered as a military fake. The second time was the Malvinas War which was firstly characterised by early support and public enthusiasm but which ended with blaming the military forces for incompetence, corruption and disastrous atrocities. The last illusion is family silence. After seven years of neglecting victims and in some cases blaming their actions (ugly subversives and terrorists), the frame

changed in order to claim justice. Promptly, the victims became close and the people always conscious of what had happened. For Marcelo, who believed in the football campaign as a child, in the Malvinas as an adolescent, and the not knowing of the family as a moral stance, the sequence left a bitter flavour: "Finally, the 1980s are not my favourite time." Such an 'evaluative clause' in his narrative forms part of an 'ironic plot' elaborated years later after a new disillusion.

3.6 Easter 1987 and hyperinflation

The formative years of this age cohort were impinged upon by processes of political activism and coming to terms with the dictatorial past. As a generational site, it is likely that this could have given rise to a 'romantic' generational narrative (I shall clarify that this plot was promptly blocked; see also Chapter Six for this narrative genre). This narrative structure would enclose a beginning (the Malvinas disaster), a middle (the awakening of public activism and processes of accounting for the past) and a promissory future: a true democracy. The narrative includes strong oppositions: e.g. a heinous military force and sacred, massacred victims (children and women). There were also many heroes: the human rights groups, the government's first steps towards taking the past into account, and a great part of Argentine society which suddenly became politically active, condemned all the crimes, and quickly forgot the enthusiasm for the football event or the Malvinas/Falklands War.

Certainly, the majority of the respondents located themselves historically in such a narrative sequence. Nevertheless, taken as a generational narrative, the we-performative dimension is rather absent. Young people did appear as secondary actors or passive characters. Young political activism followed classical organizations that reproduced old divisions (e.g. Peronism-Radicalism youths). *Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit* is mostly related to earlier traumas and conflicts. In other terms, amongst generational voices, they followed a former 'canonical generation' (Ben-Ze'ev and Lomsky-Feder 2009).

Contrafactually, the crucial point was allocated in the narrative 'end': the promise of true democracy. The performance of such a promise should have been exactly the site to enact romantic emplotment. Let me show a decisive sequence of events of illusion/disillusion that eventually blocked the future of such a narrative plot.

A new wave of trials against the military followed the initial procedures against the military junta, encouraged by human rights organizations and the effective performance of tribunals. Yet, these trials went beyond Alfonsín's preliminary goal, namely, to judge only the commandants-in-chief and the 'key' perpetrators. Then, Alfonsín's government passed in Congress a 'Final Point' or 'Full-Stop Law' which sought to end the human rights trials. The law had unforeseen consequences: a rapid rise in the prosecutions against the military occurred before the law was passed. As a reaction, a right-wing 'uncivil movement' (Payne 2000) emerged led by second-rung branches of the Army that rightly feared that all those who played a role in the dictatorship could be judged. The rebellion of the *carapintadas* (painted faces) aimed therefore to impede the continuation of justice and restore military honour. A sequence of violent conflicts again took place in Argentina, from 1987 until 1989. The setting was diverse barracks taken over by military rebels.

The first event in this rebellion occurred at Easter 1987: a group of military rebels seized the Army quarters of 'Campo de Mayo', attempting to stop justice procedures. As a civil counter-response, there was an enormous public mobilization in May square to support democratic principles. The setting was highly dramatic. Alfonsín – from the balcony of the government palace – asked for 'time' from the demonstration gathered in order to obtain a military surrender. He left the palace, went to the barracks and himself negotiated an end to the conflict. He returned to May square and from the same balcony announced their surrender, closing with the sentence: "The home is clean. There is no blood in Argentina … Happy Easter." In fact, the leaders of the rebellion were detained (though new forms of military rebellion followed). Yet, at the same time, the government took the opportunity to pass, a month later, a law of 'Due Obedience' in which responsibility for human rights violations was framed only to include maximal authorities. Such an event was lately narrated as 'treason' since it marks the beginning of the end of the first wave of state policy concerning human rights accounts. Let me offer Marcelo's account in this context:

"Yes, at Easter (…) There was no information but among a group of friends we called each other and there we were, standing up for a radical (…) Despite what Alfonsín had shown, it was necessary to be there. 2) There we were, defending him with our own bodies. It wasn't like nowadays. Today people are armed with spoons and demonstrate by banging pots standing at the front entrances of their houses. Or they watch it on television or on the

Internet, they gather together, they "like" or "dislike" and that's it with participation. No, at that time it was about defending with your own body. 3) The turning point was this sequence of betrayals; you were betrayed by one side and then by the other, first Alfonsín then Menem and so on. My generation got more and more disappointed. So the 1980s have two sides, first a big discovery, followed at the end by great disillusionment." (Marcelo, 1968)

Marcelo's account was divided into three parts. The first paragraph entails the presupposition of their active (performative) role and presence in the story *(it was necessary to be there)*. Here, it is observed a romantic end to the generational narrative in terms of it being a mission: the defence of democracy against military forces. Moreover, the event is remembered as a generational performance: *'we'* (with friends or schoolmates) were *there* supporting the democracy, in the same setting (*Plaza de Mayo*) as the Malvinas and human rights protests. They had to be there in spite of Alfonsín's goals and intentions (already converted into a *false helper* or *blocking character;* for this narrative character, see Jacobs and Soberaj 2007).

In the second part, Marcelo drew a double distinction: the we-generational performance (*we were, defending him with our own bodies)* of those years should be distinguished from those currently banging pots (right-wing, upper-middle class) and those who use new technologies to participate (younger people). The generational narrative is primarily backed up by the body's performance: our bodies testified to our participation and democratic compromise. The body acts as a memory support, reinforcing the 'authenticity' of the narrative (Giesen 2004a: 34).

The third step, however, recounted how such a romantic genre (the good hero against evil military forces) was rapidly converted into irony: we were betrayed/ defeated by false helpers: Alfonsín and Menem. The first one limited the scope of the trials, the second one will grant a general pardon. Indeed, the events which took place in 1987 were merely the beginning of the Argentine crisis with respect to the state policy of human rights. After Alfonsín's law of 'due obedience', the new democratic president – Peronist Carlos Saul Menem – announced a general pardon for the commandants-in-chief of the dictatorship and leaders of the leftist guerrillas. Furthermore, Menem triggered a 'future-oriented' narrative discourse: leave the past behind, seek reconciliation and, finally, 'look toward the future' (for such a script, see Jelin 1994:50). Later, Alfonsín and Menem would sign a pact (*el pacto the olivos*) to agree on constitutional change, thereby allowing Menem's re-election (Image 5,

next page). Henceforth, as Marcelo concluded, his generation (first mentioned by Marcelo as a noun) was getting more and more disillusioned.

Image 5
Alfonsín and Menem after the pact: false helpers

Source: http://lasimagenesretro.wordpress.com/tag/pacto-de-olivos

The end of Alfonsín's government is engraved in the memory of my respondents, not only in terms of political 'disillusion', but also related to the financial situation around 1989. Forming a crucial part of Argentineans' memory of economic events (Grimson 2012b), the country underwent harsh hyperinflation as a result of equivocal political management, capital flight and a budget deficit inherited from the dictatorship. As a consequence, Alfonsín had to resign earlier.

The widespread memories of hyperinflation involve several aspects. Firstly, this economic crisis easily links troublesome biographical aspects (for instance, parents' critical situation as well as their own difficult first years of marriage) with the national, disruptive context. In connection with this, the hyperinflation particularly allows low-class respondents to develop their life stories. Indeed, while political events seem to occur 'far away' from their lives, the economic crisis was vividly

evoked by people living in poverty. For example, Flor remembered Alfonsín's time only in terms of hyperinflation. She stressed: "*In Alfonsín's time … we referred to that time in Argentina as 'malaria' because we didn't have anything.*" A similar point is made by Luis:

"*We arrived at Alfonsín's time. There was no money, brother. How can I explain to you? You had ten pesos and you went to buy one kilo of sugar, and you went to the same place later and the price rose to twelve pesos. Do you follow me? There was no stability, prices changes two, three, four times per day! And there was huge upheaval and hunger." (Luis, 1974)*

Hyperinflation is also regarded by several respondents as a reservoir of practical knowledge for future economic crises (e.g. the crisis of 2001). After the hyperinflation of 1989, people were able to manage future economic situations. When analysing young interviewees in Chapter Five, such characteristics will be more salient as young cohorts experienced the crisis of 2001 as a radical novelty (see 5.3). Ultimately, the memory of hyperinflation seems to be inscribed in daily life practices (Connerton 1989). Luisa– a young respondent born in 1986 – remembered discovering ten oil bottles in her father's kitchen cupboard in case of new (hyper)inflation. In other terms, hyperinflation left traces, affecting even the management of and conversations about food (see Thießen 2009 for the generational boundaries provoked by table talk about food scarcity in Germany).

One aspect hardly mentioned is the illusion unleashed by Menem's campaign in order to overcome hyperinflation and, broadly speaking, the fragile Argentine economy. Menem promised a new era of prosperity, proposing a classical script: social justice and economic recovery through Peronism (Justicialist Party). For Francisca, taking part in an election for the first time, she confidently voted for Menem, encouraged by her father's story of the classical era of Peronism. However, the concretization of this promise was not the state-oriented performance of classical Peronism but rather a strong liberalization of the Argentine market, leading to a transformation of the economic system. Menem sold off a vast number of public enterprises and his government both blocked a variety of civil organizations (e.g. human rights organizations) and co-opted others (e.g. labour unions). Without hyperinflation, such radical neoliberal (narrative) intervention would not have been possible (Novaro 2009: 307-332).

Such a 'promise' was barely mentioned. Rather, Menem's two periods of government (1989-1995; 1995-1999) were remembered by my respondents as a depressing political period. After the economic and political crisis of 2001, preceded by a visible increase in pauperization (new urban poverty), Menem became Argentine's black legend ('the country was destroyed') and, indeed, all my respondents remembered his government as being corrupt and dreadful (see also the 'hyperbolization of the evil nineties' in young accounts in 5.2).

Breaking the illusion of social justice and having ended the policy of human rights, Menem's period prepared fertile ground for narratives of disillusionment. All the respondents who remembered Alfonsín's eighties as a period of political activism, experienced the nineties as an era of political deactivation. The illusion of youth *militancy* was death and an ironic stance was firmly instilled. Following narrative theory, an ironist is a character who assumes 'flexible pragmatism' and the 'avoidance of illusion'. The sequence of course is not original, rather structural. As Jeffrey Alexander (2002:12) has already noted, disillusionment after the First World War brought about 'irony' as the master trope.

In such a structural sense, there is also a crucial match between the sequence of the life course and the narrative emplotment. During the 1990s, for all respondents, their life courses were impinged upon by processes of getting married (ten out of twelve), working and having children. Five of them continued at university, though working at the same time, though two of them never completed it. For Francisca, who gave up her study of psychology in order to work, the 1990s represent the period of bringing up her two children. The crucial point is that both processes coincide: on the one hand, the exit from the public space (due to the beginning of the adult period) and on the other the narrative of general political deactivation. Definitely, both sequences reinforce each other: the 1990s become a place of individualism and minimal participation. Here emerges a sort of generational forgetting which is worth taking into account: whether their formative years were defining, later periods became less relevant and remain outside of the generational memory frame. I would finally suggest that those who went through the formative period of the 1990s could recount all sorts of resistance to state privatization or the strong policy of neo-liberalism carried out by Menem. Yet, for these respondents, there was little to tell.

3.7 The winners and losers' stories and the return of fear

The sequence of illusion and disillusionment has as crucial antecedent the active involvement in youth organizations during the second half of the eighties. This dimension of the narrative is salient among middle-class and centre-leftist respondents. Without such an illusion, former collective events emerged simply via means of anecdotes – with the exception of the hyperinflation and its practice reservoir for future crises – or were simply disregarded as irrelevant events in comparison to biographical ones (occasionally more traumatic as in low-class respondents' stories). Nevertheless, especially by those more willing to conceal a certain difficult past, the nineties might be narrated in a different way (i.e. without disillusionment). The nineties might be encapsulated as a time of consumption and richness.

After the hyperinflation, Menem's government enforced a monetary policy of convertibility (one dollar became one Argentine peso). In consequence, the upper-middle class benefited from the new economic stance. Travelling abroad, some sort of 'Americanization' (symbolized by food deliveries), and a period of showing-off (e.g. by those who could afford a bigger better car – Mercedes, BMW – or a bigger house) were recounted as a model for *this* Argentina. The catchphrase employed is that of an era of 'pizza and champagne'. Following Svampa (2001), this script might easily be recognized as part of 'those who won' or the winners' story. Antonia, who gave an extensive description of all these changes, concluded with a generational formula:

"I belong to the generation of change, the one that left behind the old ways of spending your vacations – with our parents along the Argentinian coast – sometimes you stayed there one month, two months – for trips to the Caribbean, Miami, Orlando (…) Europe." (Antonia, 1966)

Antonia's feeling of change is also related to a crucial biographical decision: she moved to a 'private neighbourhood'. Such testimony of 'moving' stands for a crucial and impressive urban transformation in Buenos Aires during the last twenty years, namely, the building of private residences on the city outskirts. Whilst the rise in pauperisation was increasingly visible (the emergence of 'cartoneros', i.e. poor people collecting and selling recyclable materials), Buenos Aires's upper-middle class began

moving to private areas in which walls and private security created a strong in-out boundary (Svampa 2001; also Adamosvsky 2009: 421-431). During the nineties, the separation of private areas from peripheral, poor zones reinforced the feeling of a division between 'winners' and 'losers'. Private neighbourhoods shifted an old culture of middle-class urban-life, bringing about a new sociability characterized by a process of isolation and homogenization. For the upper-middle class, the outer-world began to be seen increasingly as a space of risk, insecurity and crime. A new social *character* was proclaimed – and especially enhanced by the media: the anonymous (albeit poor) delinquent. Such new fear returned us to the childhood period of these respondents.

I have mentioned above a central rift between those who recollected a harsh militarized school and those describing a beautiful past in primary school (3.2). Such a division is hardly understandable without considering this new discourse of insecurity. Indeed, memories of childhood as a positive code were evoked by respondents encapsulating the present period as unsafe, risky and violent. What is thorny and needs to be explained is why such an evaluative clause is developed by both upper-middle-class and poor groups.

Indeed, almost all respondents drew a distinction between childhood, when they could – for instance – ride bicycles without fear, and nowadays, when their children or nephews cannot. As a matter of fact, crime rates have risen since the nineties and increased after the social crisis of 2001.[39] Simultaneously, an industry of private security (alarms, walls, cameras and so forth) has developed and the popular media have intensely focused on a daily life of crime, kidnapping and murders (Kessler 2009). Hence my respondents affirmed that, nowadays, children must always be accompanied by adults outside. As a social experience, insecurity is part of the stories circulating in this generational site. Furthermore, the narrative of contemporary fear matches the cycle of the life course of parenthood and children's

[39] I will recount all the memories linked to the crisis in Chapter Five (5.3) when describing the Argentine youth cohort. Yet, not one of my respondents played an active role during the crisis, e.g. no one participated in the widespread organizations for the unemployed (*piqueteros*) or other middle-class organizations. I would suggest that this age cohort was too young to play a main role in those days (see main leaders: Raúl Castells born in 1950, Saturnina Pelozo born in 1950, Luis D'Elía born in 1957) but old enough to have actively participated in street demonstrations (as young activists). This is relevant because this age-group did not develop a new illusion in the course of the crisis (some kind of societal refoundation) as parts of the generation of the 1990s did.

childhood or early adolescence. For those of my respondents with children, the main worry becomes children's situation outside the home.

However, as a central code for framing present life stories and drawing hard temporal boundaries, such an evaluation reveals itself to be much stronger in upper-middle and low social groups. Obviously, there exists a difference between the two kinds of narrativity. Low social groups have daily life experience of drugs trafficking and the highest rates of crime in their neighbourhoods. Indeed, the incapacity of the state to offer control and security affects mainly those living in conditions of poverty. Moreover, the atmosphere of violence lived by those in the outskirts, on the streets, is replicated in the home (domestic violence) (Auyero and Berti 2013). All my interviewees (especially women) in poor neighbourhoods recounted experiences of brutal violence (a husband attempting to murder his wife, assaults, beatings) and widespread feelings of fear.

On the other hand, upper-middle social groups experience widespread *communication* about insecurity. They live surrounded by strong measures of security and control, in protected private neighbourhoods, and constantly avoiding public spaces. Crucially, the dialogue at the family table is often marked by media news about crimes. In other words, in one case the body becomes a memory support of fear (i.e. the feeling of a violent *near* neighbourhood); in another case, the family-public-social communication is revealed to be the most important support (hearing about horror from a safe *distance*). To be sure, people from the low social classes nourish their fears through the media (indeed widespread fear produces more home reclusiveness and subsequently the media stand for the main communicate channel) and the upper-middle class augment every experience that some friend or relative has personally undergone.

The outcome of both experiences leads to the same narrative sequence: there was a time (a mythical beginning) when we could feel safe in the streets (long memories of riding bicycles, taking the bus, walking home at night after parties without feeling afraid). Such a nostalgic period coincides with childhood and adolescence, yet the political context is omitted. This omission is crucial due to the impossibility of denoting dictatorship as a safe place. According to Kessler (2009:102), such a transformation (omitting dictatorship) only took place after the second wave of

transitional justice as state policy during the last ten years (since Nestor Kircher's policy; I will return to the point below).

The *narrative middle* is the entrance of drugs traffickers into neighbourhoods, the high rates of robberies and burglaries reported by the media, emblematic murders and kidnappings (unrelated to dictatorship), and the retirement from public life that occurred during the nineties. The *narrative end* is an environment dominated by evil forces and a daily life commanded by an enormous fear concerning children's situation. Here, a *cognitive map* has emerged so that every daily life activity must take into account the violent context outside (Kessler 2009: 147).

Finally, the narrative entails a particular distinction between some past time full of '*respect for order*' and a variety of signals of '*disrespect*'. Undoubtedly, the main evaluative clause of such narratives is the 'loss of respect'. Such absence is imagined in many ways. For example, respondents refer to ways of talking (the loss of formal manners), the presence of sex on television as well as the disrespect for authority. Let me recount Luis's version of social order under poverty and current youth *disrespect* for such social order:

"Other codes governed my times. In my time, if you and I had a disagreement – so to say – and we were 15 years old (…) we had a fight, you were accompanied by your gang of 4 or 5, and so was I. Well, the fight was between you and me, if any of us fell, well, fell, but then stood up and so on (…) If we are fighting with knives, then let's fight with knives, if we are fighting with chains, then let's fight with chains. If one of yours comes to support you, one of mine will come along as well. Do you get how it worked? Such was the code. Not anymore, he (a youth in the corner) has a .22 (a gun) (…) Look, all of them are 14, 15 years old. All of them carry guns (fierros)." (Luis, 1974)

3.8 Nostalgic and comic plots

The discourse about insecurity runs parallel to some fundamental social changes in terms of cultural frames. After the crisis of 2001, and the preliminary recovery of the economy between 2001 and 2003, a new Peronist president, Nestor Kirchner, was elected in 2003. I will describe the key events involved when it comes to these years in the course of the Chapter Five which deals with Argentine youth memories. For

now, let me explain the reactions this government caused in my adult respondents, and how two macro-modes of telling their lives – in light of their expectations for the future – emerge.

The first crucial point is the return of Peronism and memories of the latter. As a political force, it was relentlessly present (indeed Menem came from the same party) and it dominated the political realm due to an extensive clientelistic network (Levitsky and Murillo 2005, 2008). Yet, after the collapse of Menem's liberal economy, Nestor Kirchner revived triumphal memories of Peronism: the Justicialist Party proposes social justice and state protection. As a new illusion, the script recovers the parents' memory of classical Peronism. New images of Perón and Evita reinvaded streets, schools and squares. A graphic example is the gigantic illustrations of Evita, on both sides of the Health Ministry building since 2011, allocated to the most important avenue in the capital (Image 6). Furthermore, the commemoration of 17 October 1945 – the day when Perón was triumphally proclaimed by the masses – has been revitalized.

Image 6
Double Evita on the Health Ministry building

Source: http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eva_Per%C3%B3n

A second cultural shift in the course of the last ten years is the memory of the dictatorship. I will show (in Chapter Five) how the transformation was precluded by the civil society's efforts to keep alive the battle over the collective memory during the nineties. Yet, despite the protests from human rights organizations during the 1990s (including symbolic 'truth trials', commemorations, a second generation of victims' relatives' performances, and General Videla's imprisonment in 1998), Argentine state policy did not consider special measures for the human rights 'issue'. Kirchner transformed this by means of changing the composition of the judiciary and annulling the amnesty laws passed by Menem, thereby encouraging a new cycle of trials (though leftist guerrillas were excluded). Previously, Kirchner promoted a new image of sacral victims (mothers, children and a heroic canonical generation) as a matter of state religion. The political murders become an act of genocide while remembering became a necessity. From now on, nobody could publicly neglect the human rights crimes committed by the dictatorship, this becoming an indisputable memory. The concept of *genocide* might be incorrectly employed here (Vezzetti 2002), yet it indicates both a change in Argentina's national memory and an effect of transnational memory culture (in the sense of Rothberg's multidirectional memory; see also Robben 2012). As Gastón puts it, the *generation of* political activists murdered by the dictatorship is equated with other sacred victims.

"Germany killed Jews to eliminate their identity. Turkish people (killed) the Armenians. And here 30,000 young people – amongst them intellectuals, journalists and actors – were murdered in order to eliminate their identity, so that that generation does not have an identity." (Gastón, 1972)

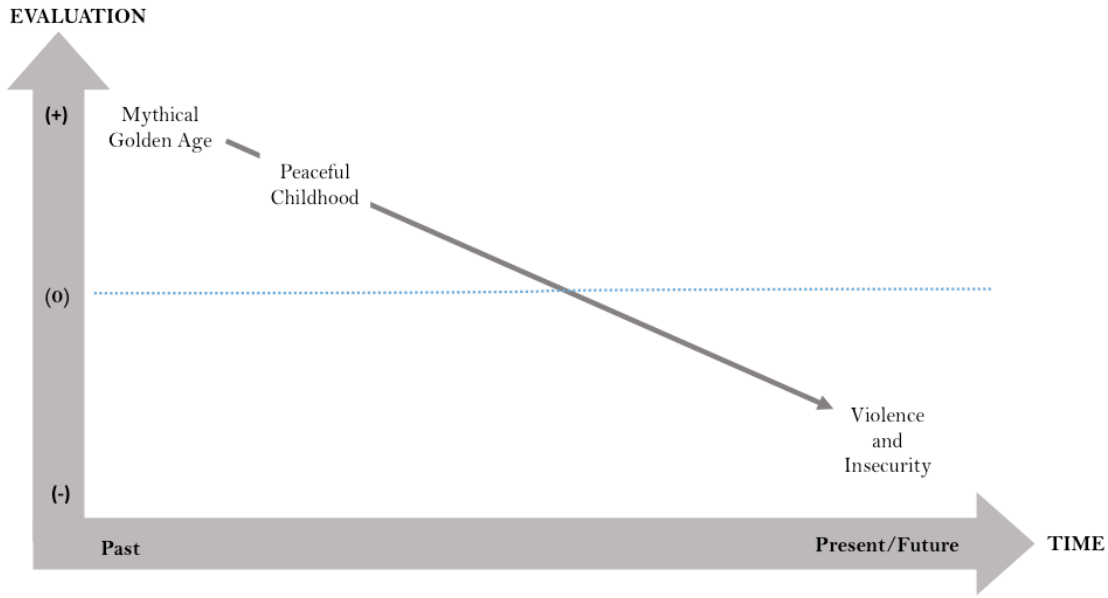
In such a context of Argentine memory turning points, two narrative modes of emplotments are noticeable: on the one hand, a story of decadence and longing for a (mythical) past, and on the other hand, a 'happy ending' story of inter-generational connection. Both emplotments entail not only particular images of the past, but also contrasting 'horizons of expectation'.

Linked to the fear-insecurity story, the present is recounted as traumatic in relation to a nostalgically viewed past. Still, for the poorest groups, there is no historical reference: they live under conditions of violence and remember only some parts of their childhood as being more peaceful. Even if the government is doing well (the lower classes actually received new public subsidies), these conditions have not

fundamentally changed the insecurity environment and the lack of opportunities after the crisis. For the upper-middle class and those normally right-wing, the present time is not only dominated by a new form of corrupt-populist state control (Kirchner's government) but, more importantly, Argentina is walking along a path of decadence. Since the military period cannot be thought of as a safe time, the mythical triumphal order is previously localized as the great Argentina of the XIXth century (or at least before 1940, when Perón took control).

Such narrative sequence of decadence have a long tradition in Argentina (see Semán and Merenson 2007: 251-274). They are indeed frequently used by a large array of nostalgic actors: 'We had everything to become a great country, but the politician caste corrupted the natural order.' It is a Latin American version of Spengler's '*Untergang des Abendlandes*' (Figure 3). The future in such a narrative is grey and hopeless. For Cesar, new generations are increasingly becoming more aggressive and violent: 'all of them carry guns and consume drugs'. For Rosario, new generations are not able to sustain an entire process of communication (new technologies produce only quasi-communication). For Antonua, there is no hope in Argentina, her future lies in living abroad (hopefully in a European country), in a safe place where her children – all of them studying in English, private universities – can pursue a professional career.

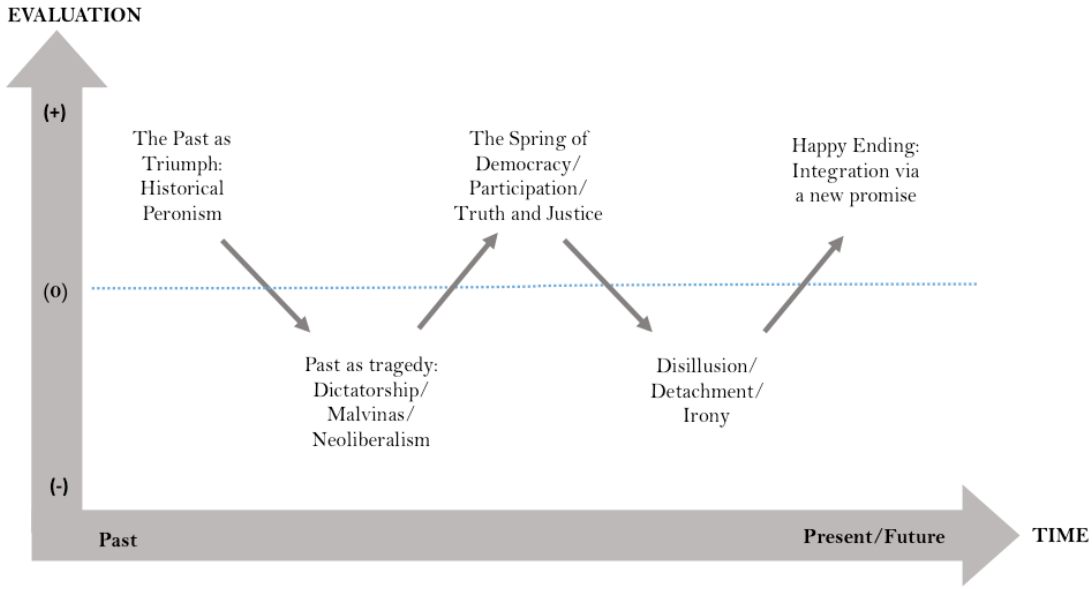
Figure 3
Nostalgic plot-line



On the other hand, those who celebrate the reclaiming of state control after a period of 'furious liberalism' bestow a new illusion on the Peronist script (the revival of social justice and political activism). Crucially, the new promise actualizes their parents' stories of Perón's first government. Moreover, the new Peronist position brings together a renewed process of coming to terms with the dictatorial past, a crucial component of their youth experience. Henceforward, national difficult pasts are reinforced: they lived childhood under the most heinous dictatorship, growing up seeing defeat in the Malvinas and went through Alfonsín's and Menem's treasons. The majority perceive the transformation after the great crisis in positive terms, and some of them enrolled again in political or civil associations. Yet, some of them maintained an ironic stance. There is no revival of romantic views (the canonical generation of the seventies occupies such a narrative position now). Rather, they develop a comic plot, understood as the "integration of society" (Frye 1952:43). In line with classical narrative theory, I understand comedy as not being about laughing, but "movement (…) from one kind of society, where the protagonist's wishes are blocked, to another society that crystallizes around the hero" (Jacobs 1996:1245). As Kuntsen portrays, in comedy "in the final act the threat is defused. The misunderstandings are cleared up. A happy end is secured" (2002:122). Frye, in his classical formulation, concludes: "the normal response of the audience to a happy ending is 'this should be'" (1957:167).

It is worth mentioning that for many interviewees, the hero is not the government but the new generation. For Francisca, the new youth political activism recalled her own formative years (for a comparison, see Natanson 2012). The new generation recovers the spirit of true democrats through political activism and new forms of social participation. Francisca is very proud of her son who studies in a public national school and actively participates on the scholars' council. Francisca and Marcelo decided, moreover, to return to university in order to finish their studies. They observe the future very positively as they trust in their new peers. All in all, the 'comic plot' achieves a macro-intergenerational link since it encompasses parents' times of experiencing historical Peronism, their own formative years of political activism and finally the transmission of the promise of true democracy to a new generation (Figure 4, next page).

Figure 4
Comical plot-line



Chapter 4

Santiago de Chile, 1966-1974: Memories of the transition and a consoling plot

The following chapter is based on twelve narrative interviews with people born in Santiago de Chile between 1966 and 1974. By showing the different biographical and collective events they remember, the text analyses how people locate themselves historically in the same temporal frame as the last chapter, although in a different national context.

It is generally argued that Argentina and Chile follow different patterns in terms of institutional and social arrangements. Such differences will be illustrated throughout the chapter, including variations in migration stories (rural immigration instead of the European one), the length of the dictatorial period (seventeen years instead of seven) and the event(s) that led to its end (a referendum rather than a military defeat), among others. Nevertheless, similarities will be visible at the generational level as the reporting of analogous narrative sequences concerning, for example, the illusion of democracy during youth and the disenchanted adulthood of the late nineties.

Yet, in the end, two narrative differences turn out to be crucial: the Chilean interviewees do not propose a robust narrative template when recounting the past via anecdotes and moral evaluations. Such a feature is, I argue, rooted in collective processes of blocking and moralizing difficult pasts. Secondly, whereas the Argentine stories are plotted, either nostalgically or comically, the Chilean stories ultimately embed a 'consoling plot': Whereas the promise of democracy was not achieved, they found consolation in their private lives. Ultimately, the present is bearable compared to dictatorship, but no collective illusion offers a 'happy ending'.

4.1 Historical boundaries: Rural Migration and Allende's government

The Chilean respondents' stories repeatedly began with grandparents and parents coming from north and south.[40] As I have previously shown, given the tidal wave of European immigrants arriving by ship, the Argentine respondents even embrace

[40] Santiago Valley is situated in the centre of Chile.

World War stories. By contrast, stories about migration, for the majority of the Chilean respondents, refer to migration from the provinces to the capital, arriving by train or mule.

Marcela for instance told the story of her old grandmother coming from the south, remarking on her roots: *"My grandmother was from the south. She was Mapuche.*[41] *She was of course half Mapuche and half Spanish."* The adverbial reference 'of course' might indicate either an assumption that to be Chilean *is* to be 'mestizo' (half indigenous-half Spanish) or Claudia's emphasis on having *not only* indigenous heirs (also claiming 'white European' roots). Leonardo also recounted his grandfather's (triumphal) migration, preserving traces and scents of a distant past:

"My grandfather turned into a wage earner with a permanent contract, living in a good neighbourhood in Concepción (RF: an historical university Southern city). *Since that was a period when there was public education, my father was enrolled in the Liceo Concepción, one of the best Chilean public schools. He was a very talented student and enrolled at the Medical School of the Universidad de Concepción. He completed his studies and moved to Las Condes (RF: an upper-class district in Santiago). In that way, in just one generation, my family had access to welfare standards that they had never had." (Leonardo, 1971)*

Chilean family memories frequently show such internal displacement: migration from the provinces to the capital, from the countryside to the city. Even great parts of modern Santiago were still rural areas forty years ago. For some respondents, their childhood memories still include dirt roads, farms and vegetable plots, as well as livestock pastures. For Sergio, who grew up in a southern part of Santiago (Puente Alto), the first ten years of his life are situated in green, rural areas.

Sergio was born in 1972 and his parents constantly told him that he was born in a period of *democracy and freedom.* He was born when Salvador Allende was in his second year of government, attempting to build 'the Chilean road to socialism'. Sergio did not have any personal memories of such a political project. His first impressions are of the era of the military regime. Similarly Patricio, born on 11 September 1972, has no memories of *the communist* government. On the same date in 1973, a coup d'état overthrew Allende's government. Patricio remembers on every

[41] Mapuche are native residents of the southern territory, including southern Argentina. They resisted Spanish colonialism and, during the nineteenth century, the Chilean army. Violent conflicts over territory and recognition are ongoing.

birthday how his old aunt raised a flag outside their house in order to celebrate the military regime, at least on his first 17 birthdays – the span of Pinochet's regime.

Both Allende's death – he killed himself on 11 September 1973 – as well as the beginning of the military regime establish a historical boundary (i.e. a historical setting which marks the beginning of their narratives) for this age cohort. The Chilean putsch took place two and a half years before the Argentine dictatorship began. The military junta comprised the three branches of the armed forces (navy, air force and army) and the police, yet powerfully led by the commander-in-chief of the army, Augusto Pinochet.

There were few personal memories of such an event, just family accounts. For Sergio's parents, the coup d'état signifies a long period of suppression of democracy; and for Marcela's parents, it was a time of alarm and fear as they were active in the communist party. Luckily, they were not 'mortally' affected.

Neither was Ignacio's family affected by the *communist* government. His father, from the moderate right, was working for a private bank and had never queued for food. The *queue* crystallizes Allende's government economic management, the 'time of scarcity'. Cristina, born in 1968, did remember queuing for food, yet she believes that 'high social castes' were blocking food redistribution.

The Allende and Pinochet eras strongly divide contemporary Chilean memories of the last forty years (M.A Garretón 2003, Huneeus 2003, Manzi et al. 2004), representing a Cold War division in which clear cultural boundaries were drawn. As Steve Stern has stated (2004): here emerged stories of salvation – a country rescued from communism and scarcity – versus a story of rupture and persecution in which the burden of exile, torture and *desaparecidos* is recounted. Nonetheless, both stories appear in a different light today. After forty years my respondents seem to keep their distance from those strong narrative templates. None of the interviewees entirely believed in the 'memory of salvation', as some of their parents or relatives did (nobody referred to the dictatorship as *'pronunciamiento'* – military uprising – as military adherents used to do). Nobody could deny the crimes against humanity perpetrated in those times, although only one of my respondents knew (approximately) the number of victims.

Differences in what is remembered become much subtler when one contrasts Sergio's and Marcela's stories of the putsch as the end of *democratic government* with Ignacio's and Patricio's stories of the end of the scarcity experienced during the *communist period*. As an enduring cultural code, old boundaries emerge by predicating Allende's government as either democratic/socialist (positive code) or communist (negative code).

Furthermore, the putsch is always represented as a historical rupture, thereby drawing an absolute distinction between before and after. In contrast to Argentina's stories, Chilean grandparents' and parents' historical circumstances (i.e. before the seventies) were barely recollected in order to describe or evaluate their own stories. Apart from a few remarks (e.g. Leonardo's story about his grandparents situated in *the period of public education* and Sergio's narrative about his father's positive memories of former governments – the 'radicals' and Frei's period), it seems that Chilean respondents mostly 'forget' such periods – and not only regarding the dictatorship as is usually thought. The 'forgotten' time corresponds to the period of widespread (state-activated) popular mobilization (M.A. Garretón et al. 2003). This period is characterised by a strong state-oriented economy that contrasts to the project of economic liberalization initiated by the dictatorship. Certainly, people do not remember such analytical phases or make such sociological distinctions. However, what is noteworthy is the absence of communication (family accounts) and cultural figures (images, rituals, spaces, popular texts) amongst my interviewees when recalling this period.

To be sure, the Chilean dictatorship was not more 'traumatic' than the Argentine experience. Neither were the stories behind both difficult pasts irrelevant for understanding the historical denouncement. If the Argentinean respondents encapsulated the historical past by means of a long sequence of political and economic events (from Perón's government in the forties through a variety of authoritarian regimes), this was due to different memory frames. Indeed, the absence of such a period was partly provoked by the military regime when reviving the nineteenth century nationalistic story and negatively denoting earlier periods (see 4.2 below). Moreover, the political opposition (left-wing parties) also narrate memories of the putsch as an absolute break and Allende's government as a traumatic political defeat (Hite 2000).

All in all, the coup d'état has always been narrated as a dramatic turning point, leaving behind a historical boundary beyond which more distant historical pasts fade away.

4.2 The military regime: grey atmosphere, aeroplanes and bodies

The coup d'état was a turning point that my respondents did not avoid when narrating the past.[42] Only the older respondents (born between 1966 and 1969) had some blurred recollections of the military putsch and subsequent years. Let me start by recounting Cristina's first recollections:

"My first clear memory dates back to me being five years old, the year is '73. I believe my clearest memories are indeed related to the military putsch because they are painful. I remember the aeroplanes and the grey day, and that I didn't understand anything. I observed my parents looking very sad in front of the television (…) That was a grey day. I didn't understand but I felt there was something going on. I watched the television and there were soldiers and tanks, and I heard my parents saying it was something terrible, but I didn't understand why it was so terrible." (Cristina, 1968)

Cristina, a daughter of teachers living in a low-middle class district, began her interview by narrating the coup d'état when she was five years old. She remembered her parents watching the news and – similar to the Buenos Aires respondents – she did not understand what was going on. She just recollected watching media reports. The images displayed on television were shocking: tanks and soldiers on the streets. Still, she could not grasp why her parents found these images so dreadful.

Noteworthy is the frame of media memory revealed in Cristina's recollections. Different to Argentina's experience, television was already widespread (especially in public spaces such as restaurants or clubs) due to the holding of the 1962 FIFA World Cup in Chile (Hurtado 1988: 84-86). The common black-and-white TV image of the military putsch left a *grey memory*, becoming the most mentioned 'colour' of the first years of dictatorship. To be sure, this is not simply a technical issue. The photographic (and triumphal) memories of the 1962 FIFA World Cup (when Chile seized a mythical third place) are colourful. By contrast, the military event was

[42] The literature on the period is extensive. As a start, see Constable and Valenzuela (1991), Huneeus (2000) and Stern (2006).

framed by means of black-and-white images on television and the photographs circulating, thereby enhancing their narrativity of a great tragedy.

A further aspect is the image of aeroplanes circulating over the city. This is a frequent image employed for reporting that time (Jeftanovic 2013). Bernardita, born in 1972 and from an upper-class background, narrated the military putsch as a time when her father was standing on the roof watching how the government palace (La Moneda) was being bombarded by the air force. She stressed that she did not have any memories of the period. Still, she linked her family memories (e.g. her father's account of watching 'the flights') with an image of the government palace being bombarded.

By contrast, Yani evoked bitter memories of that time. She was born three years earlier in a poor emblematic shantytown (*población*) and remembered listening to the radio, with her grandmother, when announcing an apparent bombardment of their neighbourhood (ultimately, it was not attacked).[43] She recollected running away, with her father, during the night to another neighbourhood.

As I showed in the previous chapter, childhood memories of difficult collective events are composed of both dim recollections and group memories (family accounts as well as collective templates). Thus the grey atmosphere and the aeroplanes circulating are not simple biographical memories. They are available 'figures of memory' (*Erinnerungsfiguren*) which – as Jan Assmann (1992: 38, footnote 19) notes – refer "not only to iconic but also to narrative forms". Cristina, for instance, offered a very salient account in which she evoked one of the most traumatic images of those days: bodies floating in the Mapocho River.

"You know, something I could never forget was when I was five years old and people approached the Mapocho riverside to see the corpses floating, we were all staring. I remember my mom telling us 'Don't, don't' and pushing us aside (…) This thing, you know, I didn't realize what it was. I looked at the river but luckily I don't have any memory of any bodies, however, corpses floated down the river." (Cristina, 1968)

[43] La Legua – a working class shantytown in Santiago – was one of the few places where people resisted the military intervention. The rumour of an aerial attack, the resulting alarm and the noise of low-flying aircraft is one of the shared stories most often recounted there (Garcés and Leiva 2005: 85–88).

Cristina vividly revived the entire situation, though she did not possess any memories of the floating bodies. Her mother could have recounted the scene later or she could have come in contact with it via the media. Certainly, it is not relevant if Cristina saw or did not see the floating bodies. What is important is that all these memory figures (grey atmosphere, aeroplanes, and floating bodies) form a tragic narrative made available to describe childhood memories of the military regime. This narrative is frequently recounted by those whose family comes from a left-wing circle or by those who lived in poor shantytowns.

As Leonardo explained, the left-wing circle and the poor were the main victims, and therefore, *"if you did not live in a poor neighbourhood and did not belong to a leftist environment, you could live without realizing that human right crimes were being committed."* Hence, for those families without victims or military regime followers, the major trope for narrating the past is the 'communicative silence':[44] nobody talked within the family about what was occurring within the country.

I have already pointed to similar life-course settings and mechanisms in the case of the Argentine stories: home and silence. To be sure, this silence was partly provoked by the fear arising from the dictatorship's clandestine repression (the fear of being persecuted).[45] Indeed, silence was recounted as a parental requirement not to repeat these topics outside family conversations. Some respondents evoked the figure of the '*sapo'* (the frog), which alludes to common people who act as spies or informers for the military in neighbourhoods, schools or workplaces.

Other interviewees (especially right-wing groups and members of the upper class) viewed silence simply as their parents' decision, to maintain a quiet, private space. A regular metaphor to evaluate those years is the image of a 'bubble': 'we were living in a *bubble'*, signifying a closed, homogenous, innocent environment floating above 'reality'. According to Patricio, his father chose to protect his family during the dictatorship as seen in 'la vita è bella' – a direct reference to the film 'Life is Beautiful'. The phrase entails a subtle and ironic connotation as Ivan transforms from being a bystander (indeed his family supported the dictatorship) into a victim: similar to the film, the father hid his child away from the heinous life outside.

[44] A. Assmann (2013:42). I will return to the notion of communicative silence in Chapter Six.
[45] See for the Chilean case: Lira and Castillo (1991), Lechner (2006) and Politzer (2001).

Many of my respondents did not clearly remember 'the seventies'. Most of them were quite young and only remembered playing with other children in the streets. Still, the mention of 'playing' outside will be important when they contrast the experience of modern street insecurity perceived since the nineties (see 4.8 below).

A second setting for narrating this time is primary school. Here I barely encountered the image of a 'barracks' or the military supervision noticed in the Argentine stories. Rather, school was recounted as a time of playing and friendship. Nonetheless, Leonardo made a witty remark about his book on language in the second year of primary school:

"When I was a boy I knew that the President of Chile was Pinochet (…) and I remember we were taught in school that the soldiers were good. I remember my second-year Spanish exercise book. The letter G began the words 'General, Gallant, Grandiose' (laughs)." (Leonardo, 1971)

Leonardo's reference to the exaltation of soldiers and the army might be expected, yet meaningful. The process of controlling teaching and book contents was already widespread (see PIIE 1984). Tellingly, a great number of my respondents passed the whole period of their primary and secondary schooling under dictatorship. School was one of the settings to enact the dictatorship script.

The military forces presented themselves not simply as saviours from the 'communist nightmare', in addition the junta emphasised a nationalist script according to which the country flourished only during the 19th century and saw an abrupt declined during the next century.[46] The 19th century stands for the formation of a good liberal (authoritarian) state and the time of epic battles against 'weak' enemies (wars against Bolivia and Peru). That is, that period corresponds to a mythical time of great, brave generals who sacrificed themselves for the fatherland (as the military junta saw itself). Such a script was performed and reinforced in weekly ceremonies to honour the fatherland (*patria*) in schoolyards and public squares. Here it is possible to encapsulate multiple respondents' anecdotes, such as the singing of the national anthem (including, as Leonardo noted, a verse to celebrate the brave soldiers), the pride of being a flag-bearer or the school bands.

[46] The template was first elaborated and promoted during the late twenties by conservative historiography (Sagredo and Serrano 1994).

The Chilean dictatorship publicly commemorated every 11 September as a public feast, thus reinforcing the temporal boundary between before (chaos/communism) and after (order/military salvation) (Candida 2002). Although the Argentinean and Chilean dictatorships share the Cold War script of 'saving the country from the internal enemy' (often recounted in the media through medical metaphors such as a mission to 'extirpate the Marxist cancer'), the commemoration of such a script plays out differently in the two countries. The Argentine junta held only one private mass and a restricted parade every 24 March (Lorenz 2002). The reason for this difference is a political one. Whereas the Argentine dictatorship never managed to achieve a hierarchical unity amongst the military forces (thus the requirement for an internal ritual [Jelin 2002]), the Chilean military junta (under Pinochet's strict control) was never – seriously – internally threatened. Hence it could openly celebrate its 'victory against the Marxist tyranny' and, as Stern explains, how it 'sealed the equation of the reborn Chile with the heroic nineteenth-century past" (2006: 68).

As an intentional effect, the dictatorship 'erased' or narrowed the meaning of former decades, marked by a public mobilization (before the seventies). This erasure of former periods still has consequences today. After forty years a historical narrative which brings coherence to the sequence leading to the putsch is still lacking. Allende's *unidad popular* and the coup are just two traumatic turning points without plain antecedents. For most of my interviewees it was difficult to explain why the coup took place at all. The reasons given are somewhat metaphysical or moral: either a selfish desire for power or a mere division of economic and political interests. Other respondents explained that Chile suffered something *like* a civil war. Remarkably, people emphasise the preposition 'like' in order simultaneously to offer and neglect such an explanation. That is, the country was indeed divided *like* in a civil war, but just one side turned out to be the victim of military violence. Margot's explanation of the coup to her nephew is informative:

"It was telling him that it was like a civil war but it actually wasn't. How can you explain it to children without lying? Because it is a tragic wound in Chile, many innocent people died. You have to explain it to children, by avoiding that the wound continues to bleed for years. You can't avoid it, you have to do it. The only option is saying that two brothers fought each other and that one killed the other. It is sad, it is a cruel explanation for children, yet you cannot overlook it." (Margot, 1969)

Medical and religious vocabularies are intertwined here. There is a 'bloody wound' which needs to heal (as the Marxists had to be extirpated). The wound was provoked by a mortal struggle between two brothers. This biblical template (the Cain and Abel story) was repeatedly proposed in order to explain such agonising circumstances. The coup was just the result of two brothers' struggle in which one brother ultimately died. I will show that such a template was elaborated by the first years of the democratic period.

José– from the same low-class neighbourhood as Margot– preferred not to tell his children about this period because it would breed resentment (*rencor;* or, as Margot says, *'by avoiding that the wound continues to blood for years'*). José was the only case in which a relative (his grandfather) was imprisoned in the national stadium. Yet, in the course of the interview, he preferred to remember biographical events and attempted to avoid the military years in order to hamper hateful stories. As a result, while the parents' previous time is barely recalled, early childhood events are either moralized or left aside 'for the better' (Araujo and Martucelli 2012: 40).

4.3 The economic crisis of 1981 and public mobilizations

Leonardo remembered that the first time he realized that he was living in something called a 'dictatorship' was around the plebiscite of 1980. The junta organized a referendum in order to legitimise a new constitution elaborated by a group of civil authorities. Leonardo recalled how an uncle commented at the family table that people should vote to reject Pinochet's constitution. In spite of his uncle's advice, the result was 67 per cent approval for the new constitution. The outcome was likely to be a result of fraud, although Stern reckons that there was at least 45 to 50 per cent support for the dictatorship at this time (Stern 2006: 173).

This preliminary, subtle and minimal breaking of the silence ('we began to talk in the family about the country in the 1980s') is preceded and followed by memories of economic events. Some upper-class interviewees remembered how at the end of the seventies already some people were experiencing increasing market access (e.g. the arrivals of foreign goods, such as colour televisions, Japanese cars or imported toys [Stern 2006: 167-169]).

Capitalist boom and bust was, however, not overcome and people soon suffered another harsh economic crash (1981-1982). Magdalena remembered how her father – a middle-range businessman – suffered insolvency and the whole family had to learn to economise. Leonardo remembered that ten schoolmates left his private English school. Memories of the economic crisis are explicitly mentioned by upper-class respondents. Yet, the consequences of such depression were widespread. Different respondents' parents lost their jobs and suffered severe conditions during those years. Likely connected, most of them began to have family crises. Half of my interviewees suffered a family division (mostly the parents' divorce) between 1979 and 1983.

For those respondents living in poverty, that time is acutely evoked through different changes to the life course. Carlos had to stop studying (in the last year of primary school) in order to support his family economically. In addition, his family moved to the grandmother's dwelling, sharing a small place with various relatives (*allegados*). Moreover, several floods were mentioned ('82, '84, '86) thereby reinforcing memories of harsh conditions. Additionally, the '85 earthquake was particularly remembered by those living in the worst material conditions. For example, Solange recalled how her house was completely razed by the earthquake.[47]

In such a context, Margot remembered how her mother organized soup kitchens (common pots) with other neighbours in order to offer minimal nourishment to the poorest. The 'common pot' is a key figure that harks back a time of strong solidarity between neighbours which contrasts to today's 'individualistic' society, thereby engendering deep feelings of nostalgia.

A decisive consequence of the economy crash was public mobilizations (De la Maza and Garcés 1985, Moulian 2002: 261-297). After ten years of dictatorship, the public arena became slowly occupied by groups arguing for the end of the regime. New groups from the extreme left wing attempted to create a public impact via several blackouts. Listening to the radio in the dark and lighting candles were some

[47] Certainly, the trembling memories of earthquakes (e.g.: Chillan 1939, Valdivia 1960, Algarrobo 1985 and Maule/Bio-Bio 2010) left their mark on all the Chilean cohorts (Guichard and Henríquez 2011). They are an infinite source of family stories ('Your grandmother survived the earthquake of…').

recollections of that time. Here began the time of pot-and-pan banging which was also engraved in the memories of my respondents.[48]

Yet, it is relevant to mention a subtle distinction in terms of generational experiences. At the very beginning, the protests were led by the working middle class (esp. copper workers), and later predominantly by students and shantytown inhabitants. Based on the performances of those university students and marginal youth groups, a vast literature has been produced concerning the generation of the eighties (Agurto et al. 1985, Politzer 1988, Muñoz 2011, Valenzuela 1988, Weinstein 1989). Most likely, as Salazar and Pinto (2002: 235-258) point out, the first experience of 'networking' that this generation had took place during the late seventies during semi-clandestine cultural activities (esp. in Catholic centres or small music clubs – so called 'peñas' [Muñoz 2002: 44-54]).

However, my respondents were too young to have been part of such experiences. Given their ages, they did not participate in the protests. Most of them were finishing primary or starting secondary school (although two low-class respondents had already abandoned school: José had to support his family and Margot, just 15 years old, was having her first son). The beginning of youth began with watching people struggling against the regime and demanding democracy. For them, the media (particularly the radio and the first anti-dictatorship magazines) were the key route to listen to and read about what was happening. In this sense, public mobilization represents an important communicative breaking of the silence rather than an experience of active participation.

Protests indeed become the clearest event through which my respondents started recognizing a divided country. The first widespread acknowledgement of the heinous victims' circumstances started to become public knowledge. As Marcela recollected:

[48] I have already noted the role of pot-banging in Argentina, especially for upper-middle class/right-wing protesters. Curiously, it was also a protest practice of the Chilean upper-middle class against Allende's government. However, the meaning of pot-banging was inverted during 1983 as a means of protest against the military regime (M.A. Garretón 1988: 8-9). Henceforth, pot-banging became a key repertoire of left-wing protests. Indeed, 18 years later – in the middle of the student movement in 2011 – pot-banging returned in demonstrations against the right-wing government.

"Then the protests began. People started to go out and demonstrate. News of people being tortured and the discoveries of corpses in different places was broadcast on the radio. Such a reality had an enormous impact on me. We listened to the news every day, with my father during lunch." (Marcela, 1966)

Even though the time of brutal repression (in terms of the numbers of victims) was at the beginning of the dictatorship, there were high-profile murders during those years.[49] For example, some respondents mention the death of a French priest, Andrés Jarlán, in the shantytown of La Victoria as a symbolic figure. Cristina vividly remembered the masses filling the streets while accompanying her parents to the cathedral. Another emblematic figure mentioned was the case of three members of the communist party (Manuel Guerrero, Santiago Nattino and Manuel Parada) who were kidnapped in a central district and later murdered by having their throats slashed. For some respondents, the public acknowledgement of these crimes signified not only the return of the fear seen in the first years of the dictatorship (transmitted by family accounts), but also one of the first times of experiencing clandestine terror in the city centre. Acknowledging this was of course as a result of victims' family struggles (as well as those of civil society organizations) to 'awaken people's consciousness' of the military regime's practice of murdering opponents.

Fear was not only a consequence of emblematic crimes against humanity. Even though the military regime had, following the crisis, decided to grant some freedoms (especially to the media), the public mobilizations prompted the increased presence of army forces in the streets. Leonardo remembered seeing tanks for first time in upper-class districts. Sergio remembered very clearly how, after the mortal attack on General Carol Urzúa by a leftist group (MIR, Revolutionary Left [Izquierda] Movement), the schoolyard was marked by a sense of fear. Ultimately, hundreds of random deaths occurred during the protests – provoked by unpredictable shootings, a clear strategy by the dictatorship to heighten public terror (Moulian 2002: 284).

The most frightful situation was remembered in the low-class shantytowns. Low-class respondents recalled some sort of house raids (*allanamientos*). There was a sequence of these raids in Santiago's shantytowns, which began with the coup, decreased in subsequent years, but escalated again after 1983 (Moya et al. 2005: 75).

[49] One important exception is the discovery of burned bodies within some lime ovens in Lonquén, 1978 (Stern 2006:156-167).

Margot's description of the house raids is an acute memory of this experience. She gave an example of the multi-directionality of memory (a cross-referencing of traumatic pasts, Rothberg 2009) in which Jewish deportations supported her own narration.

"And suddenly the police arrived and did house raids. I remember when they did the great house raid covering several blocks (…) They took all the men aged 15 years or over from their houses. They were all taken to Plaza Brazil because the police claimed that arms were being hoarded in Yungay shantytown (…) It was like in the movies, though it is a sad comparison, when the Jews were taken from their houses by the Nazis. Likewise, men were gathered in groups of eight and taken along the street to the park. The park was full of men, they spent the whole day there. It was a freezing-cold day, there was a thick fog. Some of them were even brought out naked." (Margot, 1969)

The beginning of their adolescence is similar to the equivalent Argentine age cohort reported (see 3.4 above). The Argentine respondents experienced the Malvinas/Falklands War via the media, listened to the radio and talked about it at the family table. Sometimes there were some older brothers who took part in the war campaign or the protests. Thus both age-groups presented themselves more as passive actors, rather than playing active roles at that time. For sure, there are key differences. The war led to the abrupt collapse of the Argentine dictatorship. The massive cycle of mobilization ended with a failed attempt to assassinate Pinochet in 1986, and the decision of the political centre-left to look for a constitutional solution (see 4.6 below). Moreover, the Malvinas/Falklands War is still narrated as an important collective moment of illusion. The war – albeit narrated critically as a military fake – remains a sacral site of national identity in Argentina and is continuously remembered in streets, films, squares and rituals of mourning. In contrast, the Chilean street protests do not play such a sacral and dominant role in the Chilean collective memory (divided memories are still visible there). Rather, the evaluative point made by my respondents after those years of street protests was the reinforcement of fear.

4.4 Intermezzo: television as a cacophonous memory device

At the end of the dictatorship, 46 per cent of the population voted for continuity of the military regime in a national referendum. Three of my interviewees showed a clear family adherence to the dictatorship. When it comes to talking about those years of protest and human rights crimes, they emphasised the role played by television in order to hide information. Censorship was actually imposed by the dictatorship on TV programmes. Most part of the respondents connected the silence of those years with such a strategy.

Nevertheless, television expresses something much more striking. In contrast to memories in Buenos Aires, the Chilean interviewees often referred to the experience of watching television. Leonardo remembered spending three or four hours watching television every day. A good part of the respondents recalled watching cartoons. Teresa and José– coming from opposite socio-economic sectors – both remembered watching Japanese anime (Gatchaman or Force G; Heidi, Girl of the Alps; Candy Candy). Indeed, both had even recently looked for the music from those cartoons in order to evoke those times. Sergio even began his interview with a memory of watching television. He remembered following 'TELETON', a television campaign inaugurated in 1978 with the goal to raise funds for handicapped people.

Television memories include different entertainment programmes (cartoons, the first Chilean soap operas, game and music shows). Young spectators were looking for alternative activities in the public spaces neglected by the repressive state. The dictatorship decreed two states of siege after 1973 until 1978, and after the national mobilizations from 1983 until 1987. I suggest that obligatory home reclusion – augmented by the feeling of public fear – reinforced the practice of watching television. As some scholars have already stressed, for this age cohort television became a fundamental part of their lives (Durán 2012, Rojas and Rojas 2007).

This persistent presence of television can be regarded as a cacophonous support. Following Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger (2010), cacophony is a mechanism for producing social silence. It is brought about by constant repetition of different commemorations in order to block critical voices. I suggest that the constant mentioning of entertainment programmes and cartoons did in fact produce a cacophonous memory of such experiences, thereby blocking public stories about those years. For sure, the public stories are not forgotten, but they remain rather latent. Indeed, my argument points to the frequency (in comparison to the Argentine

stories) with which these television programmes feature in my stories, thereby overshadowing other stories. As such, older entertainment programmes and cartoons are constantly employed as material for remembrance and nostalgia. This is of course not an intentional and conscious strategy but reveals the impact of media on the probability of remembering critical times (Neiger et al. 2011, Zierold 2010).

Remarkably, the most popular and awarded Chilean serial of the last five years is *'The Eighties'* (2008–2014), a nostalgic portrait of that decade. The serial begins with a middle-class father deciding to buy his wife a colour television. The device is set up in the living room and, in subsequent episodes, the television images watched by family members allow the narration (or silencing) of public events that occurred during those years. The serial attempts to recount and visualize how a 'normal family' (i.e. neither political victims nor direct supporters of the regime) went through that period. The serial entails a highly emotive plot (via the characters' biographical crises) that reinforces the idea of normal people suffering and overcoming a difficult past. The programme represents a persuasive effort to reproduce the music,[50] images, clothes, technology and social practices of that time.

This serial was mentioned by the majority of my respondents in order to evoke their youth. Most of them watched the programme together with their children. Yet, some subtle differences are informative. For Patricio– a right-wing follower – the serial is quite convincing because it portrays a middle-class family suffering 'external events' while they tried to live as peaceful normal workers. By contrast, for Cristina, the serial rather silences violence and fear and she therefore insisted that such a programme was unable to portray accurately the cruelty and violence that characterised the period. Cristina would prefer to watch another serial which more plainly recounted cases of crimes against humanity (*Los Archivos del Cardenal*, 2011). Both serials represent, in different ways, a new wave of media memory evolving in recent years.[51]

[50] Music is also a key memory support when remembering these times. From melancholic bands (Santiago del Nuevo Extremo and Schwenke Nilo), to more rock-pop bands (Los prisioneros), a new wave of bands shaped the period (K. Donoso 2009).

[51] The apotheosis of this media memorialisation will be the fortieth anniversary of the coup d'état in 2014. My interviews took place prior to this eruption of memory. During the nineties it was, however, almost impossible to broadcast such images and even now some films, for example those by Patricio Guzmán, are not broadcast on public television.

4.5 The secondary-school movement as a failed generational memory

I have already raised the relevance of the social protests unleashed after the economic crisis. Following my respondents' stories, I stressed their passive participation during these times, given their ages. However, it might be argued that people from this age cohort did not take on any role in the public mobilization of those years at all. There was a sequence of protests in which students at public (state) secondary schools were involved. Such demonstrations were later known as the eighties 'secondary-school movement'. I will analyse the absence of such a movement in my respondents' stories as a case of failed generational memory.

To be sure, my sample of interviews offered a hint of this. The first school protests took place in emblematic middle-class public establishments in downtown Santiago. Low- or middle-class respondents attending secondary school in the outskirts possibly less contact with such experiences of mobilization (even though the presence of streets protests was mentioned). On the other hand, my upper-class respondents portrayed their schools as 'bubbles', having no contact with the struggle. In this sense, the first actions of the student movement never transcended their particular confines. Moreover, the new wave of public repression after 1983 augmented parents' fears, which also blocked youth activism. Margot was indeed participating in a group of political activists linked to the Catholic Church. Yet, she had to stop attending because her father was frightened by his daughter's political activism as he himself had suffered persecution as a union leader.

Just two of my respondents attended such emblematic public schools. Mauricio did remember a 'police bus in front of the school' and how the police often beat some students. However, he never referred to such struggles as school mobilization. Magdalena did not mention any specific actions (neither did she participate actively). In general, memories of streets barricades relate more to an extensive social mobilization and are not regarded as specific to this secondary-school movement.

This absence is not restricted to my respondents' biographies. The literature concerning the dictatorship makes little reference to the secondary-school

movement.[52] The academic focus is more on university groups, popular shantytown youth protests and civil human rights organizations. Crucially, there is a lack of collective references to and memory supports for such student organization, an absent framework which results in the 'forgetting' of those events.

It was only when I asked Leonardo about some differences with the new generation of students (who have performed a new cycle of student mobilization since 2006) that he suddenly remembered and made a single reference to the protests:

"I also witnessed a social movement, one against municipalisation. During 1986 the control and administration of public schools were delegated to the municipalities. Many protests against such a reform took place. There is a famous documentary film, 'Secondary Actors', about the demonstrations of '87 and '88. Those in the movie are part of my generation, those who were in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th year of secondary school between '86 and '89. This is my generation, yet somehow I witnessed the movement from a distance." (Leonardo, 1971)

Leonardo attended an upper-class private school (hence 'I witnessed the movement from a distance'), yet he remembered the public mobilization against the *'municipalisation'* in 1986. This was a crucial reform whereby public schools were 'freed' from the control of central government in order to be supervised and financed by local authorities. A direct consequence (hence a reason to protest) was that given the fact that, in Chile, municipalities are usually divided along social-segmention lines, poor and middle-class people receive less public funding, thereby reinforcing inequality and the private education system. The project of municipalisation began in 1981, but it was cancelled and then forcefully restarted in 1986 by the military regime (PIIE 1984).

If Leonardo evoked memories of such social mobilization only when I asked about the new student protests, this is probably due to the fact that the recent student movement in Chile has struggled against the same reform. The documentary alluded to, *'Secondary Actors'* (2004), elaborates this struggle against 'municipalisation', embracing the protests against the dictatorship which have taken place in public schools since 1984. In addition, the documentary narrates the extent to which such

[52] See, for instance, the absence of a such secondary-school movement in Stern (2006), Hunneus (2000), and Moulian (2002); to the best of my knowledge, a unique reference is Álvarez (2005). In addition, see some testimonies in Contardo (2013) and a brief reference in Muñoz (2011: 239). Some novels, such as the ones by N. Fernández (2007, 2013), provide richer accounts of this movement.

sequences match a period of being young, forming networks of peers and sharing a certain style (clothes, music, objects). Henceforth, Leonardo could label this film as the story of 'my generation'.

Now, there is a difference between the 'narrative end' of this film and my respondents' stories. The documentary closes with the plebiscite as *a tragedy*, 'a generation suffering a defeat'. In contrast, most of my interviewees narrated the end of the dictatorship (via the referendum) as a mythical triumph. Almost all the participants of the film used to be members of leftist organizations which were later excluded from the new centre-left coalition. For sure, feelings of disappointment with the democratic system will become widespread only years later. Yet, narrating the referendum as a tragedy divided the generational site, as only the leftist generational unit narrated the electoral triumph as a defeat. The narrative logic behind such a tragic 'evaluative end' is that the actors were struggling against the dictatorship in the streets and, eventually, the defeat of the dictatorship was provoked by a democratic plebiscite, legitimizing the constitution of 1981.

4.6 The Yes-No referendum as a triumphal memory

Drawing upon a quantitative survey in the southern city of Concepción, Guichard and Henríquez have shown the particular importance of the return of democracy for this age cohort. Whereas all the older respondents first mentioned the coup d'état and the youngest cohort 9/11 (the broadcast attack on the twin towers in New York) when responding to the question of what they remember most vividly, people from this age cohort mentioned the end of dictatorship (Guichard and Henríquez 2011: 14).

Certainly, media and street campaigns, the day of the plebiscite and the subsequent atmosphere were vividly remembered by my respondents. They were 16 to 22 years old at that time. Some respondents had finished school and two had already started university. Three of them were working as they had left school or their families could not afford further education.

An explanatory caveat is in order here. The cycle of massive protests had decreased by 1986. According to Moulian (2002: 297-326), even by 1984 the protests had

declined, thus ending the phase of 'ebullient' manifestations and beginning a cycle of 'routinized' protests in 1985–6. Yet, the communist party and most leftist groups had baptised 1986 as the decisive one to overcome the dictatorship via popular revolt. However, the amalgam of repression and the incapacity to mobilize the wider population hampered such a possibility. Indeed, a great part of the country still supported the dictatorship, and in 1985 the economy situation had slightly improved. The dénouement was the failed attack against Pinochet. Afterwards, a group of centre-left politicians became convinced (and dominant) that overthrowing the military regime should and could be achieved within the existing legal framework, thus paving the way for legitimizing the procedure arranged by the constitution of 1980: a plebiscite (M.A. Garretón 1988: 17).[53]

The period between 1987 (the visit of Pope John Paul II) and 1989 (the election of the new president) was recounted as a single process in which a discussion about the end of the dictatorship took place. The polarization between opponents to and adherents of the military regime was perceived to be greater than ever. That is, the country was divided into those rejecting and those supporting dictatorship, a division found within families and between schoolmates and friends. Of course, such division had always been the case, but it was not always possible to voice such difference openly. In addition, such emotional intensity was reinforced by the fact that they were older. Hence, they remembered participating in an intensive debate during their last years of secondary school, first years at university or simply 'in the streets'.

Around the referendum in October 1988, all respondents recounted the public excitement at the upcoming election. Ivan remembered his aunts crying for the return of communism. Teresa– who attended an upper-class school – remembered her schoolmates discussing politics, something that had never happened before. Furthermore, those weeks and the day of the plebiscite itself were recounted as a public feast as well as a glorious triumph by those rejecting the dictatorship, leaving a strong impression of public fervour (Image 7, next page). One indicative figure

[53] In February 1988 a new coalition called the Concert of Political Parties for No was founded. Later simply referred to as 'the Concert' (La Concertación), this coalition governed until 2010 as a centre-left political union. The great innovation of this union was an historical inversion: the socialist party embraced a very moderate stance (in contrast to its position in Allende's government) and the communist party was radicalized and left aside of the political mainstream (See Roberts 2011).

often employed was that of 'carnival'. This seems to be a recurring metaphor when describing public mobilizations in Chile and one which is also visible in later student protests (see 6.5). Cristina remembered such days as the end of public fear and free street occupation. She even compared the 'joy of the plebiscite' with her children's births:

"It was a party. I had never had that feeling of going out on the street and being in a carnival. Because it had all been restrained with so much terror and so many deaths. If I think about it, the NO and my children are the most exciting things that have ever happened to me." (Cristina, 1969)

Image 7
The plebiscite as a triumphal memory

Source: http://www.letraslibres.com/revista/portafolios/plebiscito-por-la-democracia

Such a triumphant story has two sources, on the one hand, an innovative television campaign promoting a positive future. This campaign was crucial to modify a more tragic template of despair and fear which focused on the military repression and the victims (Stern 2006: 363-370). The aim was to increase electoral participation in a context in which electoral fraud was a real possibility. Finally, 92 per cent of the electorate voted, the greatest turnout in the history of Chile thus far. The campaign touched on an important social practice (watching television within the family) and raised a very clear cultural code: vote for joy and a future (the anathema was: Chile,

joy is coming). Such a simple code was in stark contrast to the alternative 'yes' campaign of the military regime, which evoked an alleged time of scarcity in Allende's time. A 'joyous future' as opposed to a return to the 'difficult past of scarcity' was the simple codification of the electoral campaign.

On the other hand, the experience of celebrating and demonstrating freely in the streets was constantly evoked by my respondents. The street was the setting for memories of the plebiscite. Having had the first opportunity of being outside with friends, participating in crowded rallies, organising car convoys or bearing flags was significant. Of course, some of them were scared of electoral fraud. But when the last result was announced, they remembered a massive celebration. Leonardo even compares such an event with the 'victory of the allies' in the Second World War.

*"I remember the day the NO won, I stayed up to listen to the results until very late. We spent the whole of the next day celebrating. We went to Plaza Italia (*RF: Italy Square, a space in the city centre in which sport celebrations occur*) and La Moneda (the government palace). I had a feeling in that moment that whatever came next was going to be less than this (…) "I am here and it is the day we are celebrating the victory of the allies." I was experiencing something I would never feel again. Over time, this feeling became stronger." (Leonardo, 1971)*

For those already aware of the national situation and those who followed the protests via the media (esp. magazines), this was a period of joining political parties, enrolling on the electoral register or taking part in student councils. Joining political parties is crucial since this assumes a central position in the process of political transition**.** Indeed, it is symptomatic – as in Argentina – that traditional political parties regained control of the public debate. They took control of government and congress through democracy. Both left and right political units which grew up in the sixties constituted henceforth a 'canonical generation' (Ben-Ze'ev and Lomsky-Feder 2009). They narrate Allende's popular unit and the coup d'état as a generational trauma, reaffirming the event to be an absolute before and after which deserves to be left behind (Hite 2000).[54]

[54] Around the university reform in 1967, two young groups started to exert strong political influence, both rooted in Catholic – albeit polar – rationales. They became canonical in later decades: the leftist movement MAPU (Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria) and the Gremialismo movement which later became the basis of the right-wing party UDI (Unión Demócrata Independiente), see Moyano (2009) and Valdivia (2008).

The point becomes even clearer when looking at the current situation of Chilean youth politicization outside political parties (6.5). By looking at these adult respondents' stories of enrolling in political parties, a frame of generational continuity becomes visible. Traditional political parties and canonical generations control the identity boundaries of public culture. In other words, this is a case of generational continuity rather than acrimony or generational breaking.

Leonardo, who had joined the socialist party, recollected how the old authorities of the party attempted to mitigate the actions of those students guiding the protests against municipalisation. Likely the political 'tone' of the new centre-left coalition mitigated the student voice, hampering the emergence of young 'political generational units'. For Mauricio, who worked intensively for the plebiscite campaign, the arrival of old 'exiled politicians' (taking key positions in parliamentary elections) signified the end of his political participation. Thereafter, a central element is how the canonical generational narrative comes to terms with the dictatorship after the plebiscite, and what symbolical impact this process had on this generational site.

4.7 The democratic promise and gradual disillusionment

By the end of the eighties, the respondents had incorporated evaluative repertoires of the campaign: the hope for a new, promising future as well as an assessment of leaving behind a difficult past. Similar to Argentina, such an emotional climax resulted in a heightened sense of illusion. As such, even though both Argentina and Chile went through different processes of coming to terms with dictatorship, I will show a similar evaluative clause at this time in both cases: disillusionment and irony as an evaluative narrative end.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the respondents were experiencing democracy for the first time. Marcela and Cristina particularly recollected the celebration in the national stadium. Both respondents connected the plebiscite feast with this celebration. Actually, the latter event took place later, in 1990, when the new president-elect – Patricio Aylwin – took office. The government chose the day following the official ceremony (when Pinochet 'transferred power' but stayed as commandant-in-chief of the army) to celebrate in the same setting in which the first

political prisoners were rounded up in 1973: the national stadium (for a symbolic analysis of the rituals of the transition, see Joignant 1998). The ceremony featured the presence of the mothers of victims who, on entering the football field, carried posters of their missing sons, as used to be the case in the Argentinean and Chilean protests against dictatorship.

Marcela and Cristina remembered the president's inaugural speech on that occasion. The power of the message was not disconnected from the memory setting and the performance of both celebrating and mourning. Here Aylwin laid out the route for coming to terms with dictatorship. He started his speech with the following words: "*This is Chile. (…) A Chile free, just, democratic. A nation of brothers.*" Aylwin revived a common frame for resolving political conflicts in Chile during the last two centuries: the fatherland and the Chilean family as core values to appeal for necessary reconciliation (Loveman and Lira 2007). He first acknowledged the referendum as an unparalleled democratic exit from a long period of hideous dictatorship, and simultaneously demanded a push for reconciliation. The specific quality of the speech – in comparison to the Argentine case – was its religious and moral vocabulary when approaching a difficult past, thereby anchoring diverse 'family' metaphors. I have already noted this template in some respondents' stories: ultimately, the dictatorship was an inexplicable struggle between brothers. Certainly, Aylwin stressed a search for truth and condemned the military regime. But, simultaneously, he warned of 'confusing' a search for justice with 'a witch-hunt'.

The most important political effect of this framing was the establishment of the 'National Truth and Reconciliation Commission' (Rettig Commission, as in Argentina, following the name of the commission's chair). For those rejecting the military regime the commission was an important memory support. On asking about the number of victims, only Leonardo could offer an answer by making reference to the Rettig Report. Marcela considered the report to be essential to uncover the crimes against humanity committed by the dictatorship. However, for Marcela, the impossibility of obtaining information about the victims' whereabouts and the sense of impunity vis-à-vis the military perpetrators was the first signal of disillusionment.

The promise of truth and justice was not forthcoming. The struggle over memory was indeed thorny in Chile since the military forces retained veto powers.[55]

Taking as an example the human rights commission, the similarities and differences with the Argentine case are notable. Both commissions were appointed to a group of renowned civilians (lawyers, writers, historians). Both aimed at reconstructing the victims' circumstances of death (or going 'missing') via relatives' testimonies. In both cases, human rights organizations did not take part (although several Chilean and Argentinean organizations supported both commissions, they simultaneously rejected the process of impunity). In both cases, the final report established a key memory support to help come to terms with the human rights violations.

None the less, there are also multiple differences (see Marchesi 2001). The Chilean commission emphasised a 'reconciliation' script.[56] As a result, the commission included representatives of the military regime, such as an ex-minister for education. In addition, the Chilean report included *military* victims murdered by leftist groups. Further, the styles of the reports differ markedly: whereas the Chilean report uses a more formal, distanced language when reporting victims' cases, the Argentinean report is more dramatic and lyrical when informing about victims' destinies. Moreover, the settings and impacts of the reports were different. While the Argentinean report was launched by Alfonsín in front of a multitude, in May Square, followed by trials against the military junta, the Chilean report was launched by a national television message. In a broadcast speech, Aylwin stressed the idea of truth, using moral terms, and emphasised reconciliation ("*This is an open wound in the national soul, that we can only heal if we try to reconcile with one other on the basis of truth and justice"*, quoted in Stern 2010: 86). Moreover, he ended up apologizing as chief-of-state to the victims' relatives. Ultimately, in Chile, all branches of the armed forces rejected the report as biased. For them, the military regime had saved the country from a communist nightmare.

The death of one of the most important intellectuals of the dictatorship, and recently elected congressman (Jaime Guzmán), implied a crucial turning point. Here, as Güell

[55] For the process of coming to terms with the dictatorship in the democratic period, see primarily Stern (2010). See also Cavallo (2012), Collins et al. (2013), M.A. Garretón (2003), Güell and Lechner (2006), Hite (2007), Lira and Loveman (2004), Loveman and Lira (2005, 2007), Straßner (2007), Wehr (2009) and Wilde (1999).
[56] In Argentina – after the 'painted-faces' counter military movement – this reconciliatory script was also adopted by Menem's government (Fuchs: 2010: 337).

and Lechner state, "the ritual of reconciliation failed" (Güell and Lechner 2006: 25). Guzmán was murdered by a group of extreme leftists in front of the Catholic University. The impact of this murder reinforced the army script of civil war against Marxism and reinforced the military's reluctance to cooperate or apologize for the crimes under dictatorship. Although the government offered a variety of symbolic and reparative measures to victims' relatives, Aylwin's government mitigated public activities after Guzmán's assassination (Stern 2010: 125, 171). In consequence and resembling the Argentine case, the governments during the nineties – especially after Frei's period 1994–2000 – promoted a 'future-oriented' narrative discourse: leave the past behind and look towards the future.[57]

However, following my respondents' stories, the disillusionment did not begin there. Aylwin had primarily announced 'justice – to the extent that it is possible', thus limiting the scope (and illusion) of fair trials. As Leonardo stressed, during the first years of democracy "[W]*e were all willing to give democracy some time, to tolerate certain things because democracy represented a change compared to the repression and cultural obscurantism of the dictatorship.*" Similar to the first years of 'Alfonsín's spring', the Chilean respondents experienced this period as one of relief and collective enthusiasm.

For adherents of the dictatorship, democracy brought nothing related to the story forecast by their relatives (the return of communism). By contrast, as Ignacio stressed, the transformation was not terrible; eventually, the country kept running as *always*. Indeed, for Ignacio, the dictatorship left behind an efficient economy – even though heinous crimes were committed. This is probably an important evaluation and a common narrative template by the right to this day. The development of democracy was a straightforward result of the regime's economic measures. It is a form of happy-ending story recounted by the centre-right upper-middle class: after times of scarcity (Allende) and the good economic performance of Chile, people are experiencing better times. This template appears together with a

[57] I understood a 'future-oriented' narrative as part of the modern discourse of progress (Koselleck 1979), i.e. the space of past experiences might not determinate the horizon of expectations. Thus, in the Chilean case, it was not only a negative clause (leaving the past behind) but also the promise of a better future. These expectations were circumscribed by ideas of political freedom, material welfare (esp. access to usually inaccessible goods via consumption, see below) and, in particular, the promise of social mobility via education (see Chapter Six for the value of education in inter-generational terms).

form of nationalistic pride: we are a more serious country compared to our Argentine fellows ("that rich country with corrupt politicians" as Ivan put it).

The disappointment is narrated as something that occurred *gradually* (see also Araujo and Martuccelli 2012: 85). It was not only a desire for routinization after a politically burdened period and high political mobilization. Although it is likely that older cohorts looked for 'relief and normality' (after Allende's Unity Popular, and the clandestine terror and public mobilizations during the dictatorship), the democratic promise of joy raised during the plebiscite might have impacted particularly on those coming of age during the dictatorship. For them, the plebiscite became *the* moment of 'before and after'. Moreover, the time 'before' was entirely encapsulated in the dictatorship, since not only was this their biographical generational site, but also because earlier periods (the sixties or Allende's time) were perceived as traumatic and polluted by older generations (Hite 2000). In addition, as I have previously shown, the dictatorship worked for years at the school level to 'erase' or mitigate the meaning of former periods.

There are different layers and forms of such 'disappointment'. Recounted in 2011–2012 (the years of my fieldwork), the disillusionment is principally associated with either the privatization of the education system, the health system situation or, finally, social inequality. However, in a more diachronic sequence, my respondents allocated their first feelings of disappointment to the middle of the nineties. Let us first hear Margot's recount of this temporal location:

"During the '90s, the economic situation of my family improved. What is sad is that families were increasingly more distant from one each other, since we all improved our material welfare. Families started to have their own worlds. I think when we were desperate and in need we all looked to each other. When the situation improved, particularly during 1994 and 1995, households became independent, and that is sad." (Margot, 1969)

For a decade, Margot's mother had organized the common pot in her shantytown. Margot experienced both how networks of solidarity emerged in times of 'necessity and despair' and, from the 1990s onwards, how most of those networks faded away as the national economy grew. Her story did in fact link three aspects: the deactivation of solidarity, economic growth and processes of social individualization.

With regard to the decline in solidarity, the wave of public mobilization decreased abruptly during the nineties (De la Maza 1999, Oxhorn 1994,). The new centre-left coalition promoted a time of 'labour' and mitigated, or directly hampered, civil society organizations. Further, many non-governmental organizations disappeared when several international foundations stopped offering financial support. In addition, the magazines and newspapers most critical of the dictatorship collapsed due to a lack of external support (Stern 2010: 223). The church was no longer the centre of contentious struggle and became just a 'simple' space of religious activities. The civil society rising up and the epic struggle were gone. Margot's recount expressed part of this widespread deactivation. Particularly in the poor shantytowns, the extensive network of solidarity and support diminished. A consequence of this fading was nostalgia for a world of communality and social support. As Stern has pointed out, especially poor women (*'pobladoras'*) voiced such nostalgic feelings: "under dictatorship *we were better* at valuing moral solidarity" (Stern 2010: 189).[58]

Concerning Margot's impression that her neighbourhood was improving economically, she is referring to the 'transitional success story'. Between 1990 and 2006 the percentage of people living in poverty or indigence dropped. Compared to other South American countries, indexes of social development (with the fundamental exception of inequality rates) strongly improved (Drake and Jacksic 1999). The public budget grew and new programmes of subsides emerged. For instance, José and Margot obtained their own homes via public subsidies.

Margot's recount of the improvement in the economy runs parallel to the story of the 'consumer boom' during the 1990s. To supplement Margot's words with a middle-class report, let me offer Sergio' evaluation of that time:

"I believe the '90s were vertiginous, exciting and amusing. Yet I don't have a concept of the country's development. Well, there was country development, but not a 'collective' one. We assisted in a kind of fantastic economic boom that tried to grab you through the means of entertainment, with new movie theatres, shopping centres and all that crap being built. For me, the 1990s were something like 'build every possible shopping centre (mall) in the country,

[58] There are different 'modalities of nostalgia' (Pickering and Keightley 2006). Nostalgia as a mode of emplotment visualized in the last chapter (3.7) is based on a mythical past of national triumph (a golden age). Margot's nostalgia points to the time of her youth embedded in a network of solidarity that no longer exists. In this case, nostalgia acts as a 'structure of feeling' provoked by her collective experience.

eat all the fast food of the world, consume!' It is my feeling that all of this somehow contaminated the ideas of democracy and human development. If you ask me, the 1990s were a frenzy of intensity and development, but also consumerism and self-destruction." (Sergio, 1972)

Sergio' recount is highly ambivalent (*excitement* and *self-destruction*). In fact, there is no clear rejection of that past. No doubt, part of the middle class experienced a great transformation in terms of the accessibility of new products during those years (e.g. technological devices). Yet Sergio critically recounted the parallel urban development: how great commercial centres flourished and became the new setting of the 'consumption story'. Sergio also anchored such ambivalence in his biography. In contrast to his parents, he obtained a university degree. He was fascinated by technological devices and new products. Yet he recognized that this consumption of technology was based on debt. He preferred not go into further detail. Despite his silence, debt is the Yanus face of neoliberal consumption. A new economy based on credit has evolved during the last thirty years, allowing families unparalleled access to consume products while simultaneously going into greater debt.

Disillusionment with the post-dictatorship period grew partly because growing debt increasingly became a social concern. As Magdalena recollected, the Asian Crisis of 1997 disclosed her father's unpaid debts. Nevertheless, there is a stark difference to the Argentine story: there was no radical economic collapse in Chile as happened in Argentina during 2001. Therefore, there was no image of the 'evil neoliberal nineties' as in the Buenos Aires stories. This is crucial as, at least in the stories told by my respondents, no shared story opposing consumption was visible. According to Araujo and Martuccelli (2012: 63-67), the 'hangover of the consumption party' after the Asian Crisis did affect the attitude to debt in a 'pragmatic' way, providing a know-how reservoir for combating sexy-appeal advertising campaigns and reduced family budgets.

Finally, Margot's representation of 'families having their own world' is also part of the story of these times. Political deactivation runs parallel to detachment and indifference towards collective projects. Stories about an increasingly private world were invigorated by consumption. Different scholars have insisted on the ambivalence of such a 'new world': positive feelings of self-expression and

individualized biographies evolve together with a sense of possessive individualism (cf. Araujo and Martuccelli 2012, Moulian 2002, PNUD 2002).

Eventually, all such elements comprise one closing 'generational end': we – those who attended the school under dictatorship and experienced the referendum as a before and after, and enthusiastically shared the first years of democracy – ended up *living on our own* (See also Cornejo et al. 2014: 56-58 on the opposition between private and public within this generation). Noticeably, this sequence matches the life course in terms of the end of their youth and the beginning of their 'adult' time. As Leonardo summarized:

"During 1997 and 1998, when Frei was president, this started the disappointment with democracy. There was a lot of disappointment, anger against politicians, and a lot of it was among people of my generation (…) There was no politics, no collective life; neither there were common causes, nor a project to fight for. This period also coincides with the one during which I became an adult and began my working life." (Leonardo, 1971)

I have already noted a similar sequence in Argentina: on the one hand, the exit from the public sphere (due to the beginning of the adult period) and, on the other, the story of general disillusionment with democracy during the nineties. Both sequences reinforce each other: the 1990s become a place of individualism and minimal participation. I thus suggest a more general hypothesis: a sequence of silence-fear (childhood) – democracy as illusion (formative years) – political or social disenchantment (at the beginning of adult life) is a *transnational generational template.* In these cases, difficult pasts were framed and primarily narrated by an older 'canonical generation' (Ben-Ze'ev and Lomsky-Feder 2009). Conversely, younger generations considered these processes of coming to terms with dictatorship as incomplete.

This sequence makes possible a traceable 'structure of feelings' (Williams 1961): detachment and irony. I have already noted detachment as key component of my respondents' stories. Irony was also one of the discursive stances to be observed with Pinochet's arrest in London. The event is well-known as a turning point in transitional justice (Brett and Collins 2008, Roht-Arriaza 2006). Yet, in Chile, watching the centre-left government defining Pinochet's rights, irony emerges as the most suitable trope. The newspaper 'the clinic' (the name is a satirical reference

to the place where Pinochet stayed in London) successfully adopted such a standpoint (Image 8).

Image 8
Front-pages of the magazine 'The Clinic' portraying Pinochet

Source: http://www.theclinic.cl/revista/

4.8 Insecurity as a new trope

This generational sequence might be detected among different groups within the age cohort. Yet, it is recounted especially by those associated with the centre-left opposition. But is there a counter-narrative from right-wing respondents? No, not really. Rather, those interviewees focused on biographical events – private stories – and recounted diverse life-course events in democracy (especially the period of getting married and finding their first jobs). For them, the country developed well and access to the international market was a blessing.

Nevertheless, a new collective experience is narrated related to the democratic period which articulates neither pure opposition to the latter story nor an entirely different one. In fact, some respondents linked both stories (especially low-class respondents). The nineties serve to recount the emergence of crime and street insecurity.

Since the return of democracy, fear of crime has been a recurrent social topic (Dammert et al. 2010). Chile is usually reported as the country with the lowest murder rate and the highest rate of public fear in Latin America (PNUD 2014). For my upper-class respondents, insecurity has been a crucial issue over the last fifteen years. Teresa exclaimed: *"Cities are more dangerous, you are robbed, you are raped. Before, never."* Ignacio noted: "*Concerning insecurity, I stay with our time. Today nothing is safe, nothing is safe."*

I have already recounted a similar story circulating among the Argentinean upper class (see 3.6). The time regarded as "before" – *our* time, *our* childhood – was safer; then *we* could ride a bicycle in the street and walk alone at night. The present insecurity is contrasted with a much calmer and more peaceful childhood. Such a nostalgic belief in safety avoids mentioning the terror and persecution under dictatorship.

However, the experience of fear and (gendered) violence was particularly narrated by low-class respondents. The majority of respondents living in shantytowns spoke of their increasing fear over street criminality. For José and Margot this is mostly related to their children (José) or grandchildren (Margot). The boys must always be supervised when they are out on the streets. For all of them the root cause of this condition is to be found in the local drugs market. The noise of bullets remembered by Margot when she was five years old reappears now in the struggles between gangs. José thus wishes to return to the past – though 'not to the dictatorship' – but rather to a (mythical) 'time of respect'.

The most extreme experience was recounted by Solange. She did not remember anything related to what was reported before (dictatorship, democracy, elections and so forth), only a childhood with her grandparents and a devastating earthquake. However, something abruptly ripped these memories apart during the interview and transformed everything so that her biography was overshadowed by a traumatic experience of being raped as well as two subsequent attempts to kill herself. She

preferred to recount this suffering in order to work through her trauma (as her psychologist had advised her to do). But there was no relief as she kept living in such a neighbourhood. Over and over again, she recounted that since the nineties the shantytown has become an evil space, especially as drugs (which she also consumed at times) and gangs became endemic. Of course, Solange's story is an extreme case of violence and deprivation, but it is probably not an isolated one in such conditions of poverty, especially for women. When I asked Solange whether she remembered something about the dictatorship she answered:

"Yes, the time when there were military forces. Indeed, a few days ago I was talking to my younger sister and she asked me: Is it true that the military used to be deployed and was it better than now? I told her: I would prefer a thousand times being back in that time, with the military forces deployed. It was like a curfew, everybody had to stay indoors, and no one could be around on the streets. It would be wonderful if we could be back to that time, when people did not go out, when you wouldn't see any robberies or crimes (delincuencia), when the military took care of the streets." (Solange, 1971)

The desire for a return to dictatorship is not a feeling shared in Chile. Yet, it is interesting to observe that such formulations are still possible in terms of narrativity, while in Argentina – at least in my respondents' stories – such an alternative was blocked. I suggest that such a difference is best explained by a different cycle of memory. In contrast to the Argentine case, the Chilean process of coming to terms with the past has not been transformed into an indisputable memory this far (see following chapters).

4.9 The consoling plot

Approaching the present, the biographical stories investigated are increasingly concerned with family and work projects. Some troublesome biographical paths involve recent years: four of them went through divorce and two women experienced disruptive medical complications. An intense irritation was moreover expressed in relation to the health system and abusive forms of private payment. In addition, the burden of responsibility increases as their children came of age. Margot and Cristina were worried about their offspring's education. For the majority, education and

health as 'businesses' aroused anger and discontent. Crisitna stressed such a feeling as a consequence of the unfair treatment she received at work. Marcela also experienced dissatisfaction when speaking about the political sphere. For Sergio, who works in the most marginal outskirts, people from the poorest social segment are living in 'ghettos'. Inequality was a recurrent topic concerning the present society.

In spite of these circumstances, neither a final 'tragic' emplotment emerged nor was the current state of affairs harshly criticised. Rather, all of them reveal deep levels of ambiguity regarding the present. One metaphoric setting for such ambiguity is the appraisal of technological advances. They demonstrated an enormous fascination with the latter by using and consuming different new devices, while simultaneously expressing increasing fear over their effects on the new generations (the loss of 'communication', 'creativity', 'real enjoyment').

In such a context, two images of the future prevail. On the one hand, there are individualized versions of resignation: 'Eventually, you are on your own.' On the other hand, there is a more fatalistic version expressed by some respondents living in poverty: Hopefully (*ojalá*)[59] things will get better – but probably they will not.

When analysing their present appraisals and images of the future, the differences with Argentinean modes of emplotment become evident. Even though there were certain nostalgic feelings, either related to networks of solidarity or linked to the medial and musicalized culture of the eighties, there exists no strong nostalgic plot. Even if insecurity evokes a nostalgic discourse of childhood, there is no mythical golden age providing for an initial triumph and subsequent failing and decadence in the present. On the other hand, in spite of the right's upper-middle-class happy-ending story, there is no movement from detachment towards new integration, as in the comedy plot. That is, in contrast to the stories from Buenos Aires, no collective promise has emerged during the last decade.

What mode of emplotment embraces their past experiences and future horizon of expectations instead? I would like to draw on Frank Kermode's concept of 'plot of consoling'. This idea appears in Kermode's reflections when trying to understand the

[59] *Ojalá* is a word derived from Arabic. It literally means 'if Allah were to wish it'. When low-class respondents employed this expression, it might replicate a 'religious' (macro) sense, emphasising that such necessary transformation was beyond their reach.

apocalyptical thought (Kermode 2000 [1961]: 31). This biblical genre was born in the expectations of Christ's second coming (*Parousia*). Given that this second coming has not come about, St. John and St. Paul had to react, making immanent as well as eschatologically meaningful the period of waiting. In this sense, I deduce, the consoling plot is revealed as an alternative to a failed promise, or a response to the "disconfirmation of literal predictions" (Kermode 2000 [1961]: 9).

Among our respondents, the weight and force of democratic illusion ('the joy is coming') emerged after living an entire childhood and youth under dictatorship. The plebiscite was remembered as a mythical episode, burdened with promises of progress, justice and social mobility. The ensuing disenchantment did not completely break the lure of this 'turning point'.

Furthermore, through rituals of mourning, media memory supports and a slow process of coming to terms with dictatorship, antagonists and adherents (at least amongst these age-groups – but not older age-cohorts) ended up by sharing a minimal consensus with regards to dictatorship: grey and dreadful. Subsequently, fear as a 'structure of feeling' was the most widespread term available to speak about the past.

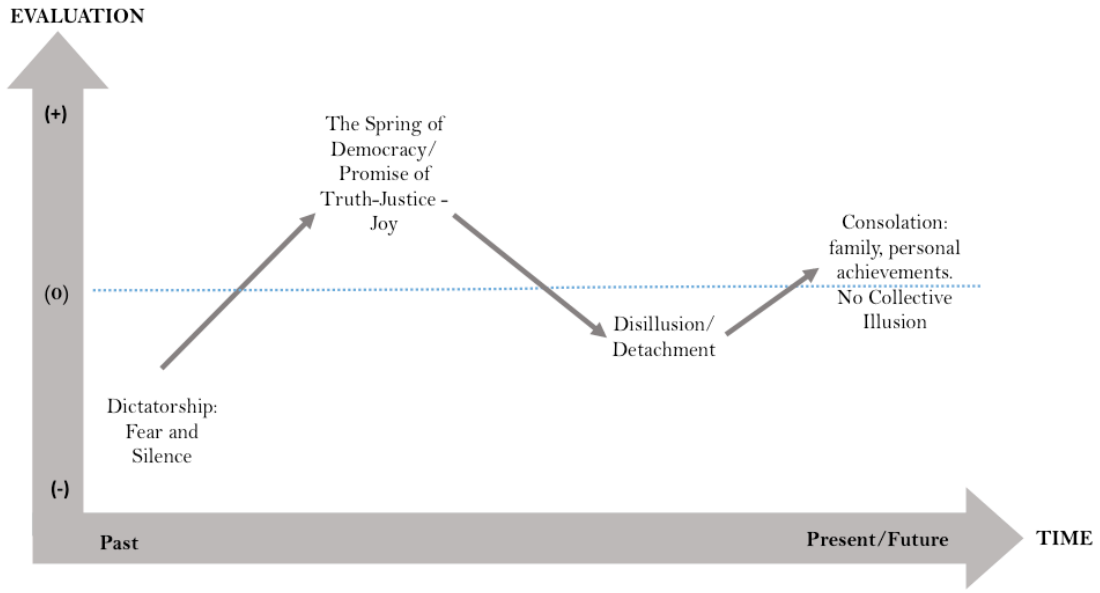
Meanwhile, the present and its circumstances resisted a 'happy ending'. There was no collective illusion which would enable hope, no promise which would support expectations of a 'second coming'. Henceforth, their families, their children and their private stories became their consolation. The point is that without a new collective promise, their collective desires became narrowed down to their personal triumphs and family achievements (See, in a similar vein, Cornejo et al. 2014).[60] Compared to the inter-generational promise of political activation and justice provoked by Kirchner's symbolic turning points in Argentina, in Chile, the story of 'on your own' prevails.

[60] One exception is Mauricio's life-story ending. Mauricio– after years of alcoholism and drug addiction during the nineties – decided to settle down and start a new relationship. While living in Peñalolén with his new partner, he established relations with his neighbours in order to struggle collectively against the government by demanding housing solutions. In October 2005 they squatted in a group of houses, demanding a right to stay there and not be relocated in some peripheral district. Housing movements turned out to be one of the most noticeable collective struggles during the last fifteen years, developing novel 'political subjectivities' (Angelcos 2012).

In Chapter Six, I will show that the canonical narrative which controls identity boundaries and maintains promises of social mobility will decay due to student protests. However, adult respondents have not completely adopted such a breaking narrative. Student protest narratives attempt to break precisely the temporal boundary which makes these generational stories emotionally meaningful: the difference between dictatorship and democracy.

All in all, the future remains private and strongly ambivalent, as their own present circumstances have become fragile and vulnerable, under constant threat from the marketization of health, education and pensions.

Figure 5
Consoling Plot-line



Chapter 5

Buenos Aires, 1986–1994: Canonical narratives and the cyclical plot

In the last two chapters I examined the Argentinean and Chilean generational memories of people born forty years ago. By looking at the intersections between life course and collective events, I focused on different narrative structures (forms of narrativity, evaluative codes and narrative emplotments) entangled in those micro and macro sequences. The intra-generational differentiation between 'nostalgic' and 'comic' modes of emplotment in Argentina and the prevalent 'consoling plot' of Chilean stories closed both sequences.

The following chapter returns to the Argentinean context in order to analyze this time how *young* people remember their lives and their defining collective events within a post-dictatorial context. I draw on 18 narrative interviews conducted with people born between 1986 and 1994 in Buenos Aires, Capital and Province. The sample embraces equal numbers of men and women, cutting across different social strata. At the time of the interviews, the participants were in the middle of their 'formative years' (ca. 17–25 years), the youngest finishing secondary school and the oldest beginning working life.

This chapter draw particular attention to the symbolical impact of remembering and recovering difficult pasts. Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile young generational sites are characterized by a strong political mobilization of youth ('the *return* of militancy' in Argentina and the cycle of 'student protests' in Chile); yet the dynamics of social memories differ strongly. The consolidation of a canonical narrative will burden the Argentine generational site. This 'burden of history' will be crucial to understanding the mounting process of youth politicization as well as a broader phenomenon of inter-generational continuity. A *cyclical mode* of emplotment encapsulates a large sequence of past recoveries: the hyperinflation of 1989 through the crisis of 2001, the consolidation of the dictatorship as a national tragedy under Néstor Kirchner's government, as well as the recovery of Peronism as a polarizing memory over recent years. This cyclical plot is enhanced through a myriad of collective rituals of mourning and several commemorations.

5.1 Historical Boundaries: the return of democracy and the hyperinflation

"Where were you born?" I asked. Vicente answered vividly: *"I was born in Moreno – where we are now – in the Northern sector of Trujui (…) I was born there in '88 (…) I was born in April '88, and throughout '89 we had hyperinflation here. So, I guess, it must have been pretty rough."* Time and place deixis (now, there, here) constitute fundamental elements of utterances through which individuals focalize and orient their stories (Toolan 2001:53). Consider Vicente's use of 'there' and 'here'. Whereas 'there' points to his place of birth (Trujui), 'here' refers to the broader space in which the hyperinflation took place, i.e. the national context. The term 'here' also links his date of his birth (*April '88*) to a national difficult period (*throughout '89 we had hyperinflation here*). Furthermore, the evaluative clause summarizing his first utterance – the guess at a rough time – is based on the double fact that he did not remember the event (he was just one year old), and yet, in spite of that, he is able to introduce himself as born in a difficult time, as the national story, or the family memory, has sustained.

Localization in time and space is a basic narrative feature – as are evaluative clauses. Luisa also offers a clear example of the significance of deictic expressions. She started by recounting her date of birth and explaining her family roots:

"The thing is that you build your memories according to what you are told happened, right? Well I was born in August '86, the year of the World Cup, right? (…) when Argentina won the championship (…) Well, I was born in August. My mom comes from a town in the Buenos Aires Province (…) I am from La Plata – which is the capital of the Province of Buenos Aires, so, it is an important city. So, I am the first generation in my family to be born outside of Salto (RF: Mother's place of origin). All of them are from small towns, except me." (Luisa, 1986)

Luisa connected her date of birth to the transmission *(you were told)* of a triumphal memory (Argentina winning the FIFA championship of Mexico '86). She also emphasized her place of birth (La Plata), thereby drawing a local-temporal-evaluative distinction between her family (coming from a small town) and her time and place of birth (I am the first generation born in the [important] city).

Although not all respondents locate themselves as clearly as did Vicente and Luisa (both are young middle-class respondents from Buenos Aires Province), almost every young interviewee acknowledged some inaugural historical location. One prevalent historical constellation is that of having been born *after* the last dictatorship (1976–1983), usually expressed negatively: 'we didn't live through *the* dictatorship'. As a result, the return of democracy as an opening and enduring period constitutes the oldest 'timemark' of this age cohort.

The 'birth' of this age-group corresponds to the time of our adult cohort's formative years (see 3.5 above): since the return of democracy, through the World Cup in 1986, until the hyperinflation in 1989. Some of their parents experienced those events as defining moments. Nonetheless, for other respondents, their parents experienced the last dictatorship (including the Malvinas/Falklands War), or more distant events in their formative periods as something more crucial. In this sense, it seems that there no homogenous parents' past for every age cohort. Group transmission might be better understood as a polyphonic 'concert' of generational voices, including those of parents, grandfathers, uncles and even friends' parents. Throughout the chapter we are going to appraise how distant, triumphant and difficult pasts are interwoven, starting from multiple experiences as well as polyphonic narrative templates.

Similar to the older Argentine generational site (3.1), these historical boundaries do not create an inaccessible past. In other words, they are 'soft' boundaries instead of 'hard' – unbridgeable – borders. 'Soft' boundaries mean that difficult pasts can be recovered and the distinction before and after is, narratively, "elasticized" (Bernasconi 2011). A clear example is social memories of the last dictatorship (1976–1983). Even if this generation was born after this period, the boost from media information, rituals of mourning, human rights organizations' campaigns, films and the shocking recuperation of kidnapped children from their perpetrator families (more than half of those 'children recovered' have been identified since 2000) has hindered past attempts of closure. For this reason I will not offer here an account of their impressions of the last dictatorship, neither their knowledge about the past nor their opinions about human rights crimes (as in the model of 'post-memories of terror' developed by Kaiser 2005). Rather, I will report how the past remerges in their life stories, at the levels of school, family, and public debate, as a symbolical and narrative turning point. Let me now first recount how they started by remembering their childhood during the nineties.

5.2 Childhood during the nineties: constructing an 'evil' time

Their first biographical recollections started in the early nineties. Four settings embrace their childhood memories: home, the streets, kindergarten and travelling. The first recurrent topic within the family space was the remembrance of *playing*. Although an obvious attribute of childhood, respondents often identify some qualities of 'their' mode of playing. For instance, some young respondents stressed that their games were more 'natural and simple' than present technological ones. Asserted as a generational distinction, they represent themselves as the last human beings growing up in a much simpler world. Natalia even reported such a circumstance as 'the loss of childhood':

"I remember my sister and my friends … playing like (…) things like acting improvisations, dressing up, to be a princess, a teacher, things that I sense that you don't see anymore (…) It's like I feel that childhood has been lost, let's say, being … being a child... I see this mainly in toys and consumption. It's like, nowadays, consumption is more homogeneous, it's like children have fewer toys, there are actually many fewer toy stores. When I was a child, Buenos Aires was full of them (…) And really now there are fewer toy stores, because I feel that today children play (…) more with computers and computer games." (Natalia, 1987)

As part of a shared generational lexicon, people (even young people) usually claim some sort of loss in new generations. Yet, the emergence of digital media in normal daily-life activities plays an interesting narrative role here. At least in middle- and upper-class memories, a recurrent story at their generational site is the continuous emergence of new technological devices. Without effort they remembered when cable television arrived, their first mobile phone, computer (including stories related to the speed and sound of their first hardware), their first time on the Internet, and their first email. They can draw a clear before-and-after picture, thereby separating their times from those of their parents. Nonetheless, digitization is difficult to appropriate as a generational mark: newer generations are more 'native' (my respondents indeed lived a childhood without computers or the Internet) and older cohorts quickly 'digitized' themselves.

A second aspect of these 'playing' memories is the relationship between home and public spaces. Respondents maintained that while they had the opportunity to play in the streets, for their younger brothers and sisters (or future generations) such a

possibility is (or will be) lost due to street insecurity. A particular template is provided by María Luisa who grew up in a closed private neighbourhood from her fifth birthday onwards. She is part of the first upper-class cohort that grew up 'in the Countries' (private residences on the city outskirts). She recounted that her parents' decision to move to a private area was prompted by mounting feelings of insecurity; in her experience, the city has always been a space of risk, while her neighbourhood offered a privileged, safe and natural environment. Certainly, in those private areas the image of the city is reinforced as a space of risk, crime and insecurity by distinguishing an inner world with a 'natural environment and peaceful relationships' versus a dangerous urban outer-world (Svampa 2001). I have already analyzed both Argentinean (3.7) and Chilean (4.8) stories about the emergence of street insecurity in the nineties, generating a strong cognitive map that includes dangerous places (downtown – the poor outskirts), times (night) and people (the poor).

The majority of young interviewees do not share the scare stories of older cohorts, although references to insecurity can be found. In fact, I detected a more pragmatic way of perceiving insecurity ('you must be aware'). The experience of those living in poverty is, nonetheless, entirely different. Hugo has been violently robbed several times in his neighbourhood, and often beaten by his father. Fabiana clearly evoked her childhood through the image of her father trying to kill her mother with a knife, and later her uncle – five years older – being assassinated at a party. An increasing amount of daily life violence is experienced in the streets and at home, a scenario well described by Auyero and Berti (2013). For a great many poor areas in Latin American cities, the incapacity of a (failed) state together with the drugs market brought about (again) experiences of violence and fear.

The third setting for childhood memories is preschool. That site represents a novelty in terms of life-course paths. Whilst only two upper-class respondents among the adult cohort mentioned kindergarten, 16 out of 18 respondents mentioned or even started to remember with this educational space. This is the first Argentine age cohort that was enrolled not only very early, but also in an almost universal way at the level of primary school (Alzúa et al. 2010:20). Still, social differences remain salient. Agustina began by mentioning kindergarten when describing her private bilingual school in which she spent her entire school life. By contrast, for Hugo, nursery is related to his mother's necessity to work and leave

him somewhere. He attended different public (state) preschools and primary schools – some of them, according to him, resembled a violent *favela*.[61]

Both Agustina's and Hugo's paths crystallize the structural character of Argentinean education today: upper-class respondents normally stay in one school for the whole of their school life (private and bilingual), while lower social respondents enrol in several public or semi-private institutions. That is, low-class respondents often change schools due to violent experiences or their parents' precarious economic circumstances (down-up sequences). Those differences became even more salient when upper-class respondents reported choosing a private university in order to avoid those 'political and conflictive' public universities ('full of strikes'). Although people may not have to pay in Argentina when enrolling at university – in contrast to the private system in Chile – the main criterion for access to private establishments seems to be marked by both political polarization (see 5.5 below) as well as strategies of distinction and elite closure.[62] Ultimately, this age cohort experienced both the universalization of the education system and the increasingly social segmentation and devaluation of the public system at primary and secondary levels (Vior and Rodriguez 2012).

Travelling memories constitute the last setting of their childhood recollections. This might be regarded as a very 'banal' remembrance (and also a very middle-upper-class memory), but it is quite informative. Consider Enrique's account:

"If you ask me about my memories from the period between 6 and 10 years old, I remember a country in which people lived very well (…) It seemed like there were few poor people in Argentina, many people travelled abroad, even my family – thank God – could afford to travel abroad several times – to Uruguay, Brazil and the USA. We had a fixed exchange rate of 1 to 1 – one dollar, one peso – therefore it was quite convenient for Argentineans who travelled abroad. However, I also remember that, when I was a bit older and more knowledgeable, the financial situation in Argentina became very unstable (…) What happened then was that decade, in which people in Argentina had the habit of wasting money,

[61] Hugo used the term 'favela' instead of 'villa'. Both words describe poor shantytowns, but the first one is used in Brazil while the second is used in Argentina. The nomination of the 'terrible school' as an 'outside' site not only shows a national 'imaginary' of the violent other (poor Brazilians), but might also narrow down one's 'own' difficult circumstances.

[62] Santiago, from a private school but studying economics at a prestigious public university, also draws this distinction within public universities: there are more 'exigent' and 'semi-private' faculties (e.g. economics) and more 'leftist' and 'noisy' faculties (e.g. social sciences).

travelling abroad, buying cars and so on, with this fixed exchange rate, was pretty much a lie." (Enrique, 1988)

Enrique's narration is suggestive partly because of its extreme metonymic character. When he claims widespread welfare or maintains that many people could afford to travel abroad, this is of course an upper-middle-class respondents' story. Certainly, many of the middle-class respondents remembered travelling abroad (and those who did not travel even regret their parents' decision) as Argentina during the nineties sustained – as Enrique explained – a regime of 'convertibility' (the Argentinean currency was converted into dollars by Menem's government in order to halt inflation), which benefitted exchange rates abroad. Still, this is just part of the 'winner' story of the nineties (Svampa 2001), whilst others in the country suffered a mounting process of pauperization (the loser story). Yet such a feature is quite obvious in terms of class memory. What must draw the attention is Sebastián's final evaluative clause: in spite of all the benefits experienced, the nineties proved to be a 'waste' or simply a 'lie'.

Remarkably, the 'lie' is the final narrative point of view for winners and losers, without exception. In fact, there exists no positive assessment of this period in terms of the national story. The negative terms employed to characterize the nineties, such as 'neoliberalism', 'corruption', privatization', 'consumption', 'lie' and 'bubble', are revealing. Luisa warned me – a common joke – not to mention ex-President Carlos Menem's surname as my recorder could be damaged.[63] It might be assumed that after the economic meltdown of 2001 (see 5.3 below) such a conclusion seems undeniable: the country was led into the abyss by a corrupt political elite. However, the widespread and homogenous negativity characterizing the nineties and Menem's government augmented after the economic crisis of 2001.[64] Even some of the older upper-middle-class respondents longed for a period of 'triumphant' Menemism. The young homogenous negativity indeed is part of some sort of *narrative hyperbolization* triggered by new governments (Kirchner's narrative, see 5.5 below and Novaro

[63] The nineties are often equated to the political period of 'Menemism' stemming from Carlos Menem's double government from 1990 to 1999.

[64] Nevertheless, human rights organizations had already linked Menem's neoliberal policies to the previous dictatorship, thereby extending the human rights tragedy to the economic and social crisis of the nineties (Crenzel 2008, Jelin and Sempol 2006; for a criticism of this stance, see Vezzetti 2001).

2004). In order to intensify the sensation of political renewal, the nineties have to appear as non-political and strongly dominated by harsh individualism.

As such, this is the same narrative mechanism employed to evaluate the period of dictatorship (3.2). Meanwhile, society appears as the victim of a 'lie' or living in a 'bubble' (especially asserted by the winners' heirs), and so the blame falls on some special groups or characters (especially, the evil and corrupt figure of president Menem). In other words, such a narrative template functions as a common evaluative mechanism (victimization) in spite of social differences.

The homogenous evaluation of the nineties is ultimately intensified by key features of childhood memories of public events. These memories are normally blurry biographical recollections as people barely develop some sort of societal perception. The narrative settings of childhood memories are the home and primary school, whereas the main activities are family meetings and games. Nonetheless, when people offer some sort of narrative focalization, as for example when describing the nineties as a 'lie', they employ available narrative templates and evaluative codes.

Numerous episodes of the nineties were not mentioned or commented on. If I had interviewed those who spent their youth during the nineties, another events might have been mentioned. A case in point is the commemorations of the coup d'état. While a good proportion of young respondents remembered the 30th anniversary in 2006, nobody mentioned the 20th anniversary in 1996, which is regarded by Argentine memory studies as a crucial turning point (Lvovich and Bisquert 2008). Thus the thesis of the 'reminiscence bump' (Welzer and Markowitsch) or Mannheim's 'formative years' may well involve a thesis of generational forgetting: some periods are poorly narrated from a generational point of view.

Schuman and Scott's work (1989) on generations and collective memories expanded on Mannheim's thesis of the formative years by demonstrating both that age is a crucial predictor of collective remembering, and that there are some events that are primordially recollected by certain groups and disregarded by others within the same age group. Drawing on an American national survey, they noted that the black population and women respondents from the 60s generation often mentioned social conflicts involving civil and women's rights, respectively. Conversely, white people and males from the same age cohort hardly mentioned those events. A very similar case is those stories related to the terrorist attack against the *Asociación de Mutuales*

Israelitas Argentinas (AMIA), the most important centre of the Jewish community in Buenos Aires, in which 85 persons were killed in 1994. None of my sixty interviewees recollected this catastrophic event, with the exception of two young Jews born in Buenos Aires.

Daniel and Paulina, both born in 1990, not only mentioned that dreadful episodic, but also started their interviews by recounting it. The importance of such narrative beginnings reflects upon the value attributed to the bombing by the Jewish Argentine community – one of the largest worldwide – whereby a sense of belonging has been elaborated (Cohen 2009). Indeed, Daniel and Paulina hardly remember the bombing, but they brought together their fuzzy memories along with family accounts and school commemorations.

Now, the absence of other references to this event is not only due to age-cohort mechanisms (too young or too old to remember the bombing), but also because of the media and political framing of the terrorist attack (Feldstein and Acosta-Alzuru 2003). In spite of the fact that the majority of victims were Jewish-Argentine citizens, they were framed only as 'Jews' (or Israelis), while the Argentine state appears as a spectator (although for Daniel, the state is rather accountable for the attack due to a supposed 'local' connection between terrorists and Menem's government). The framing of the tragedy as a 'Jewish issue' might have fostered impunity ('it is not an Argentinean issue'). As nobody was held accountable for that criminal act, weekly commemorations by the victims' relatives – and a related, strong civil society movement – emerged over ten years (*Memoria Viva*; see Cohen 2009).

5.3 The crisis of 2001 as a medial experience

According to Maristella Svampa (2006: 398), Argentina has undergone two critical situations in which the 'dissolution of the social bond has been staged': the hyperinflation and economic meltdown of 2001. For contemporary memory in Buenos Aires, both events stand for a liminal transition (in V. Turner's sense): the crossover from one social context to a new one through chaos, ambiguity and uncertainty. Both historical circumstances are surrounded by violent riots, looters and presidents who resigned. Even though the hyperinflation and the crisis are

usually represented as total events (having political, economic and social dimensions), I suggest that these transitional events illuminate an *economic memory* barely considered within the field of memory studies.

In the case of my respondents, the crisis of 2001 stands for the first collective event mentioned and reflected by them all. I have already analyzed similar episodes for adult cohorts in the case of the Malvinas/Falklands War (3.4) and the social mobilizations against dictatorship in Chile (4.4). These 'generational beginnings' interrupted family or school memories of childhood, causing a shift from the private milieu to the public setting, leaving behind a strong sense of historical novelty. Regarding the number of references in both Argentine age groups (there is no mention of the crisis in the Chilean interviews), the thesis of 'formative years or impressionable years' is supported: while 13,000 words were counted in young interviews narrating the crisis, a mere 3,000 words were used by older cohorts for the same event.

The crisis of 2001 intersects with the end of their childhood or early adolescence. As a consequence, they were too young to be 'there', i.e. 'outside in the streets' experiencing the crisis. This is repeated by all the respondents, thereby claiming some form of 'limited understanding': 'I don't know exactly what I remember of those moments (…) I was living in a parallel world.' Furthermore, those events were evoked mainly via the media. Respondents recounted the crisis as a broadcasting event, a spectacle of public mobilizations as well as unpredictable looters. Among these media memories, the most remembered event is the 'escape' of President Fernando de la Rúa from the presidential palace in a private helicopter (Image 9, next page).

This mediatized experience illustrates some generational differences. Whereas older respondents followed the Malvinas/Falklands War and the public mobilizations via the radio or press, here television occupies the primary place of narration. This will also be salient for the memory of 9/11, the attack against the twin towers broadcast worldwide (see 6.2 below). On the other hand, given the fact that my respondents did not experience such a crisis on the streets or participate in public mobilizations, they do not appropriate the broad template employed by older cohorts, namely, the crisis as a great illusion of social change. For those who actively participated in the crisis (their 'brothers and sisters' 5 or 10 years older), different collective

performances (e.g. ordinary assemblages), and the renewed political activism experienced, signified a great conjuncture of change for true democracy. They were breaking down the neoliberal system and the corrupt political elite. My younger respondents narrated neither such an illusion nor the disillusionment of seeing how the normal rhythm of the political system and its classical parties resumes the steering of the country.[65] Rather, some of them remarked that the country survived the crisis without military intervention, as that was the classical solution during the twentieth century in Argentina. This was another template of the crisis, thereby enhancing the first timemark of this generation as having always lived in a democracy.

Image 9
De La Rúa fled from the palace

Source: inciclopedia.wikia.com/wiki/Archivo:De_la_R%C3%BAa_helic%C3%B3ptero.jpg

The meltdown of the Argentine economy is reported by my respondents via a more detached narrative template which can be reconstructed as follows: during the nineties, the country suffered from a fiction regarding its economic model (convertibility). While half of the country enjoyed travelling abroad, the other half experienced a mounting process of pauperization. The unemployment rate rose

[65] In political terms, Maristella Svampa (2011) has already noted such a distinction.

dramatically and poverty visibly spread across the city (e.g. the emergence of 'cartoneros', i.e. poor people collecting and selling recyclable materials). At the end of the millennium, half the country was living below the poverty line. The failure in management by the political elite and claims of ubiquitous corruption unleashed public mobilizations throughout the country ('get rid of them all'). Plaza de Mayo was often mentioned as the main setting. Further memory figures were unemployed picketers blocking roads, lootings in supermarkets and pot-banging by the upper-middle class, or more specifically, by those whose bank accounts were frozen and suffering from the hasty devaluation when converting their savings from dollars to pesos.[66] President Fernando de la Rúa – from the radical party – did not manage to resolve the economic crisis (Vicente added in an academic tone: without Peronism, Argentina cannot be ruled). The mythical days of 19–20 December 2001 were unleashed by the imposition of a curfew which worsened the situation, ending with de La Rua fleeing in a helicopter while an angry mob surrounded the government palace. Afterwards, a sequence of five presidents resigned in just one week. Only with president Kirchner did some 'stability' return to the country (Kirchners' adherents stressed his future role, other respondents used rather passive forms and negative evaluative clauses such as 'stability came back, but insecurity grew further').

5.4 Intermezzo: Class Memories of the Crisis

The reconstruction of the shared narrative template of the crisis might not avoid highlighting some differences among the respondents. The major source of variability is brought about by class memories, mostly connected to parents' economic situations.

Upper-class respondents consistently stated that their parents were barely affected and, most importantly, that they experienced the crisis from a distance. Accordingly,

[66] Some important figures of these days, neighbour gatherings or multiclass assemblages, were hardly mentioned. The omission reveals the respondents' historical position. See the rise and fall of different lower- and middle-class civil organizations during the crisis in Svampa (2012: 117-151), Svampa and Pereira (2009), Adamovsky (2012: 439-474). An ironical stance towards the enthusiasm raised by the public mobilization is present in Auyero's thesis about the 'clientelist revolt' (2005). The historical context of the crisis is provided by Novaro (2009: 545-615). See also the informative discourse analyses in Armony and Armony (2005) and Armony and Kessler (2004).

all the upper-class interviewees primarily described the crisis as the end of travelling abroad as well as living through the crisis in the middle of holidays. Maria Luisa never mentioned the crisis during her interview, and when asked about her experience of the crisis, she commented on having been more impressed by the attack against the twin towers in New York than the crisis events since her parents did not face any problems.

The middle or upper-middle class offered a more complete report, separating the good times of the nineties (as a growing lie) and the subsequent impoverishment of their families or schoolmates' relatives. Whereas the upper-class interviewees referred to the crisis as a 'mess' (*lío*), here the discussion turns to the 'violence and repression' of the state against the protesters. Still, the most important topic is the economy, with emphasis on the loss of savings because of devaluation and the freezing of bank accounts. A further topic of the crisis here is the migration of families to Italy or Spain (for the migration waves of previous centuries, see 3.1). Natalia remarked ironically that all those families are now returning after the financial crisis in Europe.

Another segment of the middle class (sons and daughters of public servants) and low-middle class participants (sons and daughters of traditional working class members) reported the crisis primarily in terms of state violence and repression against social movements. The economic concerns of the upper-middle class are left behind, turning to a more political aspect of the crisis. Here, the crisis plays the role of the final stage of a failed neoliberal state, which spawned poverty and misery. The 'people' struggled against a corrupt and neoliberal state. Along these lines, the deaths of two young demonstrators in 2002 – Maximiliano Kosteki (21 years old) and Darío Santillán (22 years old), hideously assassinated by the police – stand as the most important martyrs of the crisis. Luisa, who could not say whether or not she had seen the bodies on television, dedicated her final studies at university to analyzing media reporting of those deaths.

Finally, those young people who were living in poverty during the crisis took a more testimonial approach (although television remained their main memory support). They remembered their parents without a job or losing their job, thereby suffering school shifts or worsening home conditions. Fabiana recollected, together with her mother and sister, picking up vegetables from the floor of the food market. Mirta

and Carmen recounted the 'anguish' transmitted by their parents. The uncertainty and ambiguity of the process here is incorporated emotionally as a collective trauma. That fear was also connected to the looters broadcast on television. Mirta evoked the chain of policemen supervising multinational Carrefour. Hugo remembered the broadcast image of a Chinese man's frenzied crying while a young man was taking a Christmas tree from his store. This image was broadcast repeatedly, trying to reinforce the meaning of looting as a barbarian act (instead of getting food, 'perpetrators' were ransacking superfluous goods such as a Christmas tree).

Another fear in poor neighbourhoods was the expectation of being attacked and looted by people from another neighbourhood. Indeed, various low-class respondents reported that their parents waited for the 'enemy'. But the enemy never arrived. It seems – according to Adamovsky (2009:466) – that this was a special mechanism employed by the police in order to defuse social agitation.[67] The mechanism functions as follows: the police spread the word in poor neighbourhoods that X neighbourhood is coming with the aim of looting, and people thus remain at home, caring for their basic property. Consequently, social mobilization decreased, especially downtown. Interestingly, when remembering the crisis of 1981 in Chile, José remembered the same situation, employing almost the same words: for several days, his parents and neighbours expected looters from neighbourhood X, but they never came. Neither José nor Hugo knew from where these rumours had originated.

5.5 The double canonization of the dictatorship as a heroic tragedy

The end of the crisis was often narrated as the beginning of Nestor Kirchner's government. Kirchner barely won the presidency with just 22% of the votes, fewer votes than the number of unemployed persons, as Luisa commented. Menem did indeed win the first round of the election but decided to abandon the process due to the risk of losing the second ballot, explained Vicente. Nearly all the respondents remembered their families' positive assessment of the first years of the new government (Kirchner's wife's – Cristina Fernández – later rule would provoke divergent and polar evaluations). According to my respondents, Kirchner managed

[67] Adamovsky (2012:458) mentions that the fear of being attacked by 'barbarian groups' was also disseminated as a public rumour in private residences on the city outskirts (the *countries*). The dangerous outside world would attack their unpolluted world.

to mend the economy after the meltdown. Moreover, he broke the 'Washington consensus' when, together with other leftist Latin American leaders (e.g. Chavez, Lula), he rejected the ALCA (in English: FTAA, the Free Trade Area of the Americas) and disobeyed the IMF's guidelines, thereby enhancing national pride and connecting Argentina to the Latin American community.

A previous president – Eduardo Duhalde – was probably also responsible for Argentina's economic recovery (Novaro 2011: 288-292). Kirchner appointed the same minister for the post of economy minister (Roberto Lavagna) – but Duhalde was nevertheless recalled for being responsible for the deaths of Kosteki and Santillán (for Luisa Duhalde was just a *repressor*). As Vicente clarified, Duhalde had to call an early election after those crimes due to the subsequent political instability. Still, going beyond his government's economic performance or the state of repression throughout the crisis, it is Kirchner's government, and the stability associated with it, the key evaluative clause.

Kirchner aimed to leave behind an era of corruption. His campaign slogan was 'Argentina, a serious country', promoting a renewal of politics. The interest here in Nestor Kirchner's government, however, lies in two turning points of the Argentine collective memory. Beyond their policies or economical management,[68] the narrative and symbolic impact of his government (and his wife's subsequent one) comes from two 'recoveries': the revival of the last dictatorship as an indisputable tragedy as well as the revitalization of classical Peronism – the dominant political constellation in Argentina – as a triumphal memory. Both recoveries influence the course of my respondent's middle formative years (secondary school, university and the beginning of their working life). Such memory turning points were precisely staged in the educative system and the public space.

Tellingly, both 'recoveries' were considered improbable in those times. The memory field of the dictatorship was circumscribed to civil society struggles and *the state* revealed to be the precise counter-field of the 'memory entrepreneurs' (in Elizabeth Jelin's terms, 2003). On the other hand, the Justicialist (Peronist) Party after Menem was fairly regarded as corrupt and clientelistic (Kirchner's recoveries are also a strategy to distinguish himself from Menemism). Both obstacles were brilliantly overcome by Kirchner, thereby provoking deep shifts into the 'cultural orders of

[68] For that see Etchemendy and Gary (2011) and Levitsky and Murillo (2008).

temporality' (Matthes 1985) of this generational site as a great wave of the historical past arrived in their daily lives. Let me provide the context and respondents' stories to illuminate both turning points.

Regarding the memory of the last military regime, the upheaval provoked by Kirchner's government can be understood as the consolidation of the dictatorship as a national tragedy, thus becoming an increasingly indisputable memory. This was primarily a symbolic and narrative turn within the political sphere, rather than a process of coming to terms with dictatorship within the sphere of transitional justice. Certainly, a mounting number of trials of different hierarchies of the armed forces were conducted, marking a new stage in transitional justice, a process comparable only in number to the trials against German perpetrators after the Second World War (see Sikking and Booth Walling 2007, Davis 2013). In order to do so, Kirchner nullified the amnesty laws (Final Point, Due Obediencia Laws as well as the pardons of top generals) enacted by previous governments and furthermore modified the composition of the Supreme Court (Levitsky and Murillo 2008: 21). Still, this process of transitional justice was the outcome of a previous, symbolic and narrative change. Kirchner primarily transformed the memory frame by both canonizing the tragedy of the victims as a universal trauma and simultaneously canonizing the generation of the seventies as a heroic-victim group. As president of the state he both proclaimed the victims as an indisputable figure of national trauma (henceforth the *Auftrag* of remembering them) and remarked on the sacrifice of those heroic victims who fell struggling for the ideals of social justice.[69]

Kirchner's narrative turn has ample precedents in previous decades. As I examined in the third chapter, Argentina experienced a prompt process of settling accounts with the dictatorship, marked by a truth commission and its report during the time of Alfonsín's government (1983-1989). This process chiefly canonized a template in which the dictatorship was a consequence of two demons: the heinous clandestine acts of the military and the violence unleashed by the leftist guerrillas. Here, society reveals itself as an innocent spectator and the victims were notably depicted in the

[69] The feature of 'indisputable memory' does not anticipate the end of a large array of conflicts about the past (See and cf. Robben 2005b). The violent seventies and guerrilla memories are still a matter of contentious dispute as well as the construction of memorials (Vezetti 2009). However, this symbolic canonization implies that victims acquire a more sacral stance whereby human rights crimes cannot be mitigated. Crucially, the dictatorship faded away as an image of order and security (see in particular Kessler 2009:102 for shifts in the topic of insecurity).

most depoliticized form (children, school students, women – all of them far from young, adult, male, violent, leftist guerrillas). Additionally, a trial against the military junta was arranged (the trial of the century; the leaders of the leftist guerrillas were also judged in a relatively quiet form). However, a further process of justice was blocked by the army and the decision of President Menem to promulgate pardons, thereby fostering a template of reconciliation and a future-oriented narrative: leave the past behind and look towards the future. For (some) human rights organizations, both governments offered a partial interpretation of the past, thereby blocking justice (see Jelin 2007, Crenzel 2008, Fuchs 2010). These organizations kept struggling against the attempts at social silence. During the nineties, they organized symbolic trials against the perpetrators ('truth trials', see Sikkink and Booth Walling 2007: 321) and new proceedings against the military junta due to the kidnapping of child victims – a point absent from the amnesty law and strategically used by the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo (Barahona 2003: 136-137). It is, however, noteworthy that the public presence of human rights organizations in the first half of the nineties was much weaker in comparison to the previous decade.

By the time of the twentieth commemoration of the putsch in 1996, an important turn had been prompted by the emergence of a second generation of human rights activists (HIJOS[70]). They were *desaparecidos'* (missing victims) sons and daughters, some of them recovered by their grandmothers from military or civilian families who clandestinely adopted them after their parents' deaths. They continued and renewed the struggle against oblivion started by the grandmothers and mothers of victims at the very beginning of the dictatorship (Bonaldi 2006). This genealogical line of political struggle fosters a sense of family understanding – 'the wounded family' in Cecilia Sosa's terms (2011a; see also Da Silva Catela 2001, Filc 1997, Taylor 2002) – which also hinders a more widespread appropriation of the difficult past. Indeed, as many respondents in Chile and Argentina stressed: 'I don't have any relatives who were affected – I cannot speak properly about it.'

[70] Acronym for Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio (*Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice Against Oblivion and Silence).*

This second generation of activists encouraged not only fresh performances of struggles (e.g. escraches[71]), but also promoted a new narrative template in which the political identities of their parents, and their struggles as left political activists, were rescued and 'heroized' (they were killed because of their desire for social justice). As Soledad Catoggio states: "this new generation of activists sought to remember their disappeared parents not as victims but rather as heroic forerunners: 'grassroots fighters and/or political militants'" (2013: 716). This heroization casts aside the thorny discussion of leftist guerrilla violence, thereby somehow idealizing the generation of the seventies (Vezzetti 2009). In addition, such a heroization of parents' struggles intersects with protests against the reduction in social rights during the nineties, thereby 'broadening the field of demands linked to human rights abuses and violations" (Jelin 2010: 70-71).[72]

Nestor Kirchner, however, took a step forward in terms of this memory setting. Consider the opening to his speech (especially the final evaluative clause) during the ceremony to mark his coming into office, when he referred to the seventies generation as both a 'decimated' group and a part of the mausoleum of heroic national figures:

"I belong to a decimated generation, punished by painful absences ... I came to propose to you that we remember the dream of our founding fathers, of our immigrant and pioneering grandparents, of our generation who gave everything and left everything, thinking of a country of equal people. But (sic) I know and I am convinced that in such a historical symbiosis we are going to find the country that we, Argentineans, deserve." (Néstor Kirchner, 25 May 2003)

In this inaugural speech, Kirchner positions himself in generational terms ('I belong to' … 'our generation'), attributing to his generation both a sacrificial character ('decimated generation') as well as heroic traits ('gave everything and left everything'). Moreover, the *historical symbiosis* proposed by Kirchner links the great mythical figures of the nation (founding fathers, [European] immigrants) with his

[71] "Public acts of 'shaming' or repudiation, in which repressors are identified and denounced loudly in public places" (Barahona de Brito 2003:157). For a documented description, see Bonaldi 2006 and Kaiser 2002.

[72] The trope 'second generation' also stimulated an important – usually contentious – number of artistic works in the film, literature and theatre fields. See for instance, respectively,"Los Rubios" (Albertina Carri, 2003), "Los Topos" (Félix Bruzzone, 2008) and "Mi vida después" (Lola Arias, 2009). For a critical stance on and interpretative accounts of these cultural supports, see Sosa (2011a, 2011b, 2012a) and Werth (2010).

heroic generation of the seventies. What is crucial here is the performative power of claiming such belonging in front of a national audience and the equalization of heroic figures, whereby he appropriated the voice of human rights organizations and fostered an image of generational continuity between mythical forebears and his generation. Later, he and his wife would include youth as a site of renovation and continuity in such an equivalence chain.

Kirchner would state four months later, in front of the United Nations General Assembly, that 'we are the sons and daughters of the grandmothers and mothers of Plaza de Mayo'. By linking his generational site to the pain of family victims, Kirchner 'embraced the position of the victims to assume mourning as a national commitment' (Sosa 2011b: 3). Human rights organizations allowed the introduction of state authority for first time when trusting in Kirchner's willingness to take a radical turn in terms of coming to terms with the dictatorship. Afterwards, justice proceedings effectively followed this symbolic turn.

The genealogical lexicon remains salient in Kirchner's speech (*'our immigrant grandparents'* or *'we the sons and daughters')*. Still, I would suggest that the 'heroic' portrait is beyond 'the wounded family' (Cf. Sosa 2011a). Soledad Cattogio observes in Kirchner's discourse some resonance of the religious figure of martyrdom, "which made it possible to reconcile the apparently mutually exclusive figures of the hero and the victim in commemoration activities" (Cattogio 2013: 696). I suggest that the heroic victims became a 'canonical generation' (Ben-Ze'ev and Lomsky-Feder 2009). Thus their stories must not only be handed down as a tragedy, but also serve as a model for future political action (in particular, for youth organizations), by invigorating a generational discourse which provides cultural models of continuity and transmission instead of generational breaking and disruption.[73]

If victimization and tragic emplotment (the 'bitter past') are a contemporary transnational, albeit mostly north-western, trend (Alexander 2002, Eder 2005, Huyssen 2003, Levi and Szneider 2002), this heroic feature of the victims might be particular to the Argentine case. Indeed, as we shall examine in the next chapter, this is the great difference from the Chilean case: the victims in Chile never acquire this 'canonical tone' and emblematic character.

[73] Anguita and Caparro's five-volume oeuvre 'the willingness' (1997-1998) and Dussel et al.'s (1997) generational interpretation were both academic precursors of this narrative (see Palermo 2004 and Vezzetti 2002).

When examining collective and political memory variations in my interviewees' stories, schools are revealed to be the social site par excellence for staging them. Yet, I do not refer here to some institutional or curricula modifications (what came later, M.P. González 2012) but rather informal communicative changes when discussing the past. Agustina, for example, clearly remembered her history teacher neglecting the interpretation proposed by Kirchner's government. What is relevant here is not an upper-class private-school teacher claiming a counter-memory, but rather the communicative consequences of Kirchner's state-symbolic voice. Indeed, given her teacher's impetus to reject Kirchner's script, Agustina began discussing with her family (*'I never forgot that dinner'*) and some peers (*'who thought differently'*):

"How? How is that possible? And I mean (…) How is it possible for someone to say that the only mistake of the dictatorship was not to have handed over the bodies? (…) And I remember arriving at home with that thought, right? Saying, 'Hey, they said that, what is that?' And generating a discussion, right? Because in the end (…) Yes, that is something that I never forgot, that dinner (…) Starting to generate the firsts discussions (…) with the limited understanding I had when I was 17 (…) afterwards there was a girl in my class and we became very close friends. She was (…) she did theatre (…) she was like (…) she would tell us about something else, that something else was happening, that something else had happened and that there were people who thought differently." (Agustina, 1988)

It was also in those years that Luisa became interested in politics and social concerns. As part of this 'social awakening' she enrolled in a school theatre group with whom she visited a 'home of memory' (*'una casa de la memoria'*) in La Plata. Afterwards, she began reading the truth commission report (the *'Nunca Más'*). When I asked about her age at that time, she astonishingly realized the intersection of that period with Kirchner's coming into office. Indeed, reflecting upon such a coincidence, she stated:

"I was 16 (…) we are talking about 2002, 2003 (…) it must have been 2003 because I was 17, 18 (…) 2003, 2004 (…) what a coincidence!

RF: What is a coincidence?

The change of government. I mean, all of that. Néstor Kirchner took office (…) at that time that didn't mean much but now, to us, to the young people, to my dad, to all of those who are committed somehow to politics, this was a very important government change, irrespective of

the criticisms one may have (…) In 2003, 2004, especially 2004, emerges a (…) a hope for change, right, in the country. That was also the year (…) I had never thought about it, the fact that that was the year I became interested in politics, there must be some connection." (Luisa, 1986)

Previously, Luisa had joined a demonstration for the first time: the commemoration of the 'night of the pencils' which is carried out every year and remembers the death of a student group when protesting against the price of student tickets (they all died, with the exception of one student). The commemoration of this crime is one of the most salient commemorative events in Argentina. A film immortalized this tragedy in 1986, and this is certainly the commonest cultural support employed by my interviewees. Especially, lower-class respondents remembered watching the film and asking their parents about the dictatorship. Fabiana watched the film at school and persuaded her mother to see it with her in order to create understanding (although her mother stated that she was just a child at that time and her grandmother even refused to speak about the bad times).[74] Interestingly, the human rights report and the film are both products of the first cycle of coming to terms with the past under Alfonsín's government (see 3.5 above). The film portrays a strong image of innocent victims and heinous perpetrators, thereby hiding the fact that all the students were members of political organizations (Lorenz 2004).

Some respondents, however, have already developed a more critical stance concerning the film. For Vicente, the film "provokes more fear than a desire to change the world" and actually –Vicente adds – "those students were kidnapped and killed because of their political activism". He remembered organizing a 'workshop' (*taller*) with parents and teachers to discuss the film. Luna, born in 1987 and growing up in Moreno as well, started getting involved in politics when protesting against the price of student tickets. Simultaneously, together with her schoolmates, she set up a student council and created a 'memory workshop' with their history teachers in order to discuss the effects of the dictatorship. The communicative change in the memory of the dictatorship intersects with a renewal of political activism in the

[74] Fabiana referred to another film (*'Iluminados por el fuego'* 2005), a cultural support for the Malvinas/Falklands War. It is relevant that the conversational tone when speaking about the Malvinas was emotionally augmented (my mother cried, my uncle cried, and my neighbour lost an eye). The narrative force of the Malvinas War (its emotionality) weighs much more than the dictatorship story within the lower classes when reporting the event in comparison to the middle classes. I have already reported the gravity of the Malvinas/Falklands in Chapter 3.

secondary schools which simultaneously began reflecting on the dictatorship (and not, for instance, on the crisis).

The 'return' of memories of the dictatorship also impacts on family discussions about the past. Most families were obligated to deal with the new questions that emerged in the schools or in student mobilizations. Some parents declared that they had been too young to remember the dictatorship (my adult cohort). Other parents drew on a widespread macro explanation, such as 'we never knew anything about the crimes'. Another section of the parents became some sort of heroes when, for instance, hiding persecuted people. Another group represented themselves as victims of the country's polarization and, most importantly, this impinged on fear of the dictatorship.

There are other stories stemming from upper-class (grand)parents who supported the dictatorship. To be sure, none of the young people interviewed approved of what happened under the dictatorship. Nevertheless, some respondents shared a classical template regarding those times: the dictatorship implies the return of social order after years of chaos, a return desired by the vast majority of the population (see 3.5). That template is sometimes recounted via the parents' experience of fear due to the guerrilla attacks (only found in upper-class memories). As Agustina said about her parents:

"They experienced it (the dictatorship) as a moment of important social upheaval in which they saw (…) What I believe is that they experienced it much more from the point of view of the attacks (…) and (…) and (…) and the bombs of the Montoneros (RF: the chief leftist organization) *(…) and they didn't see the standpoint of the government's action (…) I mean, of the military dictatorship, as they told it" (Agustina, 1988)*

Family memories can easily conflict with other memories. For Natalia, her parents' version of the dictatorship (the restoration of order) contradicts her university professors' stories and she so would dedicate her university thesis to an analysis of documentary films about the second generation. Natalia had to deal with her parents, professors and second-generation documentary films, unable to reconcile their differences. For Carmen, from a low-middle-class environment, her parents just claimed that they did not realize what was happening, but favoured military control as opposed to the insecurity experienced nowadays. Carmen felt extremely upset by those sentences and could not help wondering how people (especially her parents) kept quiet when 30,000 people were being killed. She felt lucky to have the

opportunity to attend public university and analyse without the fear of her parents' time.

At university, Carmen learned that neoliberal policies have their origins in the dictatorship. This explanation was indeed very widespread amongst leftist youth, being the dominant historical one. The new prologue of the truth commission published in 2006 precisely elaborates the connection between the dictatorship and neoliberalism (thereby linking to the evil nineties), something totally absent from the first 'canonical' prologue (see Crenzel 2007; for a criticism of the new prologue see Vezetti 2009: 120-129).

Discussion of the dictatorship then sprang up in schools and families and at university. Yet, the street and the media were also significant settings. The street is the site of popular and massive commemorations of the coup d'état. The commemoration of 2004 was remembered as the day on which President Kirchner took over the building complex of the navy –ESMA, the largest centre of detention of the dictatorship — in order to inaugurate there a central memory site (in contrast to the evil president Menem who attempted to raze the whole space).[75] On this broadcast occasion, Kirchner started remembering his 'canonical generation' (as victims and heroes) before apologizing as president for the shame of 'having being *silent* during twenty years of democracy' (such a founding 'age of apology' resembles Chilean President Alwyin's apology in 1991; both symbolic performances were staged in principal detention centres: ESMA and the national stadium, respectively). In so doing, Kirchner attempted to erase the whole of the first cycle of coming to terms with the dictatorship during Alfonsín's government, thereby establishing an absolute before (silence) and after (memory) in narrative terms (for a similar narrative mechanism, see Efe and Forchtner 2015).

[75] Acronym for '*Escuela Mecánica de la Armada*' (Navy School of Mechanics). During Enrique's interview – a very confident middle-upper-class young man – I asked him about the meaning of the letters (ESMA). He made a very salient mistake, muddling it with another military building. Previously, he had made several errors concerning the dictatorship and the current government's performances. We were meeting at a coffee house, sitting outside. Suddenly, an old man could not bear all those misunderstandings and openly commented: 'such an idiot' (que boludo!). Enrique's reaction was quite violent, asking me forcefully to stop the recorder and threatening to fight the old man. I had to avoid both things and seek a peaceful solution (go inside for the coffee in order to finish the interview). Likely, Enrique's arrogance stimulated the old man's interference, but it also illustrated the living and contentious character of past memories as well as Buenos Aires' culture of getting involves in strangers' dialogues.

Later, at the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the coup d'état in 2006, interviewees were adult enough to participate and be 'there', i.e. 'outside'. Kirchner had already promulgated this day as national holiday for remembering together. The commemoration left a special 'timemark' on many respondents. Paulina remembered attending the demonstration with her parents. Vicente remembered the great avenues full of singing masses. He was there, outside, demonstrating together with friends and schoolmates. The commemoration – and the wave of public raids afterwards – was characterized by its 'quiet' quality. For them, the new era of public mobilization left behind the repression of the nineties (as well as the crisis' liminal uncertainty) and challenged their parent's structure of feelings (fear) when, again, occupying the streets.

5.6 Peronism as a triumphant and polarizing memory

The interviewees' life courses turned again around 2006, when they started to enrol at university and technical training establishments or began their first job (often both simultaneously).[76] For the two youngest respondents this involved the beginning of secondary school. Crucially, the majority became members of or *created* a civil organization: student councils, university groups, sports clubs, musical bands, religious communities or solidarity as well youth political associations. This strong activism in civil society groups is visible in their life course and it is considered as key to characterizing this young Argentine cohort (Natansón 2012). As many respondents suggested this new engagement started with Kirchnerism. Henceforth, my interest lies in this narrative context in which greater political activism emerges. This context is not only framed by the memory of the dictatorship, but also impinges on the *revival* of Peronism.

In practical terms, the political constellation called Peronism never disappeared. Since 1940, when Peron became minister of labour and later assumed his first

[76] Youth labour work was another relevant generational experience. They started very early, working in part-time or informal jobs as well as assisting their parents. Some of them – especially the low middle class – experienced a highly volatile market in transnational firms (call-centres, fast-food restaurants, salesmen or saleswomen, among others). If there was a social concern about the future, labour instability appeared as the most common one. In other words, fear as a structure of feelings is here related to the jobs market rather than state repression (as parents recounted). For an informative anthropological, literary report, see Meradi (2009).

presidency, Peronism – later encapsulated into the Justicialist Party - has dominated the Argentine political spectrum (see especially Ostiguy 2009). Peronism is probably today best understood – after numerous metamorphoses – as a floating signifier (Laclau 2005) rather than as an ideological construction or some sort of political regime. Peronism ranges from a historical working-class party with strong influence on trade unions to, nowadays, clientelistic networks entangled in poor districts (Levitsky and Murillo 2008). Moreover, Peronism has switched from left to right several times. Without doubt, Peronism's principal effect is to divide Argentine society antagonistically into Peronist/anti-Peronist groups as a primordial code. The code works by means of a double opposition containing highly emotional evaluative structures: To be Peronist means being part of 'the people', thereby claiming a desire for social justice. The others – the enemy – are depicted as those opposed to the people's will (e.g. elite, oligarchy, upper class, amongst others). Conversely, to be anti-Peronist invokes an inverted primordial code: true democrats must uncover the deep clientelistic, authoritarian character of Peronism. The latter is transformed into some sort of Bonapartism in which the working class is manipulated or co-opted. The anti-Peronist code might also involve racist metaphors concerning the Peronists ('little black heads' or 'the zoological alluvium' to refer to working-class demonstrations). This code embraces right-wing upper-class groups as well as a more leftist, 'enlightened' perspective. All in all, both codes confront each other ubiquitously.

Although relentlessly present in the political arena as a dominating coalition, Peronism as a political memory has up-down sequences. That is, the emotional intensity to divide society into two polar constellations is not always present. Some examples are provided by the dictatorship (here: adherents vs victims) and by the nineties (here: winners vs losers). One revealing sign of this emotional absence is the commemoration of 17 October 1945 when celebrating the day of a popular uprising to support Perón's liberation. For instance, during the nineties, "the celebrations had a muted tone, even among the generation who had direct experience of the events of 1945" (James 2000: 296). Kirchner's government resurrected not only this commemoration, but also the emotive structure of Peronism as a primordial code.

In my respondents' stories there are three visible experiences of such emotional renewal. First, there is the re-emergence of (left) Peronist youth organizations within school councils or university political organizations. This emergence is

tellingly narrated as a before and after (*they came*). Luisa remembered when people from the 'Evita' movement arrived at her university in 2006. For Octavio– my youngest respondent – it was surprising that the organization 'Arturo Jauretche' was elected for leading the student council at his school (The National School). For Vicente the emblematic organization 'La Cámpora'[77] – the most powerful youth organization in the time of Kirchner's rule – dominated 'the songs' of every public commemoration. With a group of friends and ex-schoolmates, Vicente and Luna set up a young organization called 'John William Cooke'.

For the non-Argentinean reader all these names make probably no sense. Yet, these names are a key piece of the story. Evita, Campora, Jauretche and William Coke were all mythical figures in leftist Peronism. To the best of my knowledge, there is no case in Latin American history where dozens of youth organizations used mythical figures to label their units. Occasionally there appears a 'new left', 'new socialist youth' or 'Catholic youth', but youth organizations usually attempt to mark a certain distance or cause some disruption. Hence, as 'new generational units' they barely caused a generational rupture, rather they mobilized a desire to recover mythical figures. Especially Evita occupies a symbolical status in the primordial code as the purest, strongest figure of social justice and compromise with 'the people'. Whereas Perón's image is 'polluted' by his last performance as president (he was rejected and probably allowed the first systematic repression against the leftist wing of Peronism), Evita remains pure and sacred (see Sigal and Verón 2002).[78] This resembles what Bonnett (2010) has coined – referring to the English case – as a 'radical nostalgia', a particular form of the left to recover the past. Bonner points out that this "nostalgia's uncertain return may also be registered by reference to the way radicals of the '1960s generation' have discovered the pleasures of wistful remembrance. The collapse of socialism has meant that activists can cast themselves as representatives of 'lost worlds' of political militancy" (2010: 39).

[77] 'La Cámpora is the most important organization in terms of numbers and political influence within the current government. Some of their leaders (already congressmen) pertain to the 'second generation' of victims, son and daughters recovered from clandestine kidnappings by the grandmothers of victims. See Di Marco (2012) and Natansón (2012) for two journalistic reports.

[78] According to Carassai, anti-Peronism also promoted a positive image of Evita in order to make Perón's negative attributes even more salient. For the author, the "praise for Eva (…) is a contemporary way of continuing anti-Peronism by other means" (Carassai 2014: 46).

There are other left-wing organizations outside Peronism, often highly critical of the Kirchners. Carmen remembered the assassination of Mariano Ferreyra (born in 1987) in 2010 by a member of the Peronist Labor Union during a protest. Ferreyra was a student activist, part of the Trotskyist 'Partido Obrero'. For Carmen, Ferreyra stands for the current victims of state repression. Nonetheless, when Carmen explained the 'principles' of her student political organization to me she quoted both Che Guevara and Evita. As a result, even some left-Peronist mythical figures (e.g. Evita) are part of the political symbolism of members of left-critical organizations.

The second defining circumstance was the 'farm crisis' (also labelled 'the farm war' by Etchemendy and Garay 2011) under Cristina Fernández's government, a national conflict between government and the agro-export sector over taxes. The agro-industry had grown astonishingly since 2003 due to previous modifications to agricultural land (especially the cultivation of soy-beans) as well as the boost in food prices on the world market. Hence the government attempted to raise taxes, thereby unleashing an enormous mobilization of the agro sector over several months (Basky and Dávila 2008). Beyond the technical details of the political and economic conflict, the dispute was fiercely framed as a division between 'us' (the people, the government) and 'them' (oligarchic landowners; see Mauro and Rossi 2011: 172-174). Such a division not only reproduced the classical emotional structure of Peronism (Svampa 2006: 395, 2011: 27), but also stimulated young people to locate themselves within this historical polarization. Consider Natalia and Luisa's accounts of such a 'turning point':

*"They (the government) wanted to introduce a tax on the withholding of big landowners' exports, and so there was a great social opposition, in general, and well, at that moment it was not achieved. And well, and it (…) It was then when it somehow began (…) It started (…) People started taking sides. At that moment I was not a Kirchnerism follower – I came more from Marxism (…) And in that moment, when the farm crisis took place, I said no – the place that one must be is here and, I mean, the "other" (…) I am not going to be with Rural Society, no way! (*RF: Rural Society: the most important association of the right-conservative agricultural sector*)" (Luisa, 1986)*

"Well, no, with regard to my political identifications, there was a turning point in 2008, which was the conflict (…) symbolically it remained in our memory as the "farm conflict" (…) In fact, it was a problem about a tax, a tax that the government wanted to charge on soy

exports, which is the main crop in Argentina. And (…) I (…) I mean, there it began, a sort of dichotomization of the social and political space between the government –Kirchnerism – and the 'other', which was (…) it was integrated by this agro-export-oligarchy – which comes from olden times, since the establishment of the Argentinean state – together with Clarín's media monopoly. It was then that this dichotomy started, which nowadays is increasingly intensified. At that movement, in 2008, I remember that yes, I took a quite fervent pro-Kirchenerism stance, which later faded away." (Natalia, 1987)

After this, the 'revival' of Peronism as a collective memory appears throughout the public space and in family round-table discussions. My interviewees remembered discussing the first Peronist government with their grandparents or parents. Claudia evoked a moment of her childhood in which she asked her parents if her mother's forebears were Peronist. Emiliano mentioned regular family-table conversations about politics with his grandparents, reflecting on his 'political times' when talking about Perón's governments or the 'violent seventies'. Emiliano remarked how family and national memories were enmeshed in each other in table conversations, "it was a great lesson, of history, society, economy, of the daily life as well as our family and others. It was really (…) really fruitful." Depending on the code employed, Perón's first government was either narrated as a time of great triumphs in social rights or, conversely, anti-Peronists remembered its authoritarian dimension. Santiago started studying early Peronism, discovering the first implementation of labour rights by the government, but his grandfather encouraged him to compare Peronist media strategies with those of Nazism and fascism. Later, during my fieldwork, Santiago's father called on him to participate in a demonstration (pot-banging) against the government. Santiago commented on that occasion as follows:

"It is something quite unthinkable to share a political activity with a father (…) but given that many young people have become involved in politics supporting Kirchnerism, you also see many other people calling to get out on the streets and protest." (Santiago, 1988)

For those with an active commitment to Peronist youth associations, their biography increasingly becomes the story of their political organizations. The political triumphs or defeats of the Justicialist Party were their joys and sorrows. In this context, the last defining experience occurred: the death of ex-president Néstor Kirchner. The announcement of his death and burial was narrated by those engaged politically as a difficult experience of loss. A great number of the respondents were

conducting a national census on that day (young people are normally volunteers, gathering domestic information for the occasion) when they became aware of the rumours. Vicente remembered his girlfriend crying and automatically going to the national square. Luna's emotive account is most telling:

*"In 2010, that is two years ago, Néstor Kirchner died and it was, from a personal point of view and in the social context in which I live, very heavy. Because Néstor Kirchner was a very important popular leader, who (…) who made an important bunch of young people like me, in their twenties, believe in politics and want to go back to participate in politics, something that in Argentina had not occurred for a long time. And it hurt me a lot and also made me recover my history, go through everything, I mean, like all the crises that my family had gone through, also my friends and acquaintances, and (…) and to understand that from that moment onwards everything had changed and how my aim to change the social reality in which I live a little bit was related to this man, to this person who had a real name, who was flesh and bones, and I think that I realized this when he died (…) And we went for two days to the mobilizations, but I didn't go in to see him. I stayed outside in the square (RF: Plaza de Mayo) with my comrades, making some noise (*RF: i.e. singing*), crying, waving flags" (Luna, 1987)*

The presence of mythical left-Peronist figures is vividly present in different public spaces, media and especially through commemorations. Now, Nestór Kirchner is not an exception. Two years after his death, when conducting my fieldwork, the film '*Nestór Kirchner, la pelicula'* was released. Furthermore, on 17 October 2013, the day of loyalty, the image below appeared across the city of Buenos Aires, enhancing the link between past and present (Image 10, next page).

The re-emergence of political Peronist organizations in schools and universities, the acrimonious farm crisis and the death of Nestór Kirchner were three conjunctures in which triumphal and polarizing memories of old decades evolved. Even though the relationship between Kirchnerism and Peronism is thorny, [79] these three circumstances brought about a similar configuration: the renewal of opposing codes.

[79] The relationship between Kirchnerism and Peronism is ambivalent. It takes either a metonymic discursive character (*pars pro toto*) – in which Kirchnerism identifies itself entirely with Peronism – or a more metaphoric strategy, i.e. Kirchnerism resembles certain aspects of Peronism but preserves own traits. The latter is partly due to Peronism still having 'polluted' components, such as 'Menemism' or Perón's last government.

Image 10
In order not to forget: 17 October, loyalty day

From right to left: Perón, Evita, Nestór Kichner and Cristina Kirchner Source: http://www.letrap.com.ar/blog/2013/10/17/17-de-octubre-afiches-y-actos-para-no olvidar/.

In addition, these circumstances run parallel to the reinforcement of the 'national' imaginary through the increasing presence of national flags and commemorative dates.[80] The most visible occasion of the nationalist resurgence was in 2010 during the 200th bicentenary of the nation, when the 'founding fathers' and 'mythical national figures' occupied the public space through carnivals and public feasts.[81] A year later the 'Bicentenary Museum' was opened. The museum unfolds a temporal frame from the May Revolution against the 'Spanish crown' in 1810 to the triumphal 'social, economic and political recovery' under the Kirchners' government (2003-2010). This timeline not only left behind hundreds of years of 'pre-history' (i.e.

[80] I am in debt for this observation (and many other lucid comments) to the Argentine anthropologist Ramiro Segura.
[81] The 200th bicentenary was celebrated on 25 May 2010. As in Chile, Argentina commemorated its independence on the day of the first junta, as a symbol of civil insurrection. In addition, Argentina commemorated the day of the declaration of independence (9 July 1816). See Grimson et al. 2007 for an historical account of the meaning endowed on 25 May. These authors (2007:438-445) explain how, after the dictatorship, the national commemoration was polluted, linking nationalism with militarism. Henceforth, the 'nationalist' renovation under the Kirchners' government became more salient.

indigenous and colonial times), but also elaborates a progressive sense of ending endowed exclusively on the Kirchners' government.

Previous years – 'critical and formative' for the majority of my respondents – were framed by Kirchner's heroic narrative in which Argentina was taken out of its critical economic situation, thus recovering (i.e. canonizing) the spirit of the seventies generation as a symbol of political commitment to social justice. Around those years my interviewees started becoming involved in different civil organizations and remembering together the 'bitter past' of the dictatorship in schools and family-table discussions. Later, Argentinean political discussion was polarized by 'the farm war', revitalizing the emotive dichotomy of Peronist discourse. The number of youth 'Peronist' organizations grew (or the numbers of their members), as well as feelings of opposition from left and right. Even if this more political narrative is not shared by upper-middle-class life-courses, they recognized those circumstances as part of their generational site. To lower-class respondents – as occurred in the four age-cohorts – experiences of violence, exclusion and pauperism disconnected their biographies from this macro-sequence (focusing on cultural or sport networks), unless they were embedded in some political network. In spite of these intra-differentiations or dissimilar grades of identification, at the level of family-table conversations, schools, peer-dialogues or the mass media, these stories intermittently circulate.

5.7 The cyclical plot

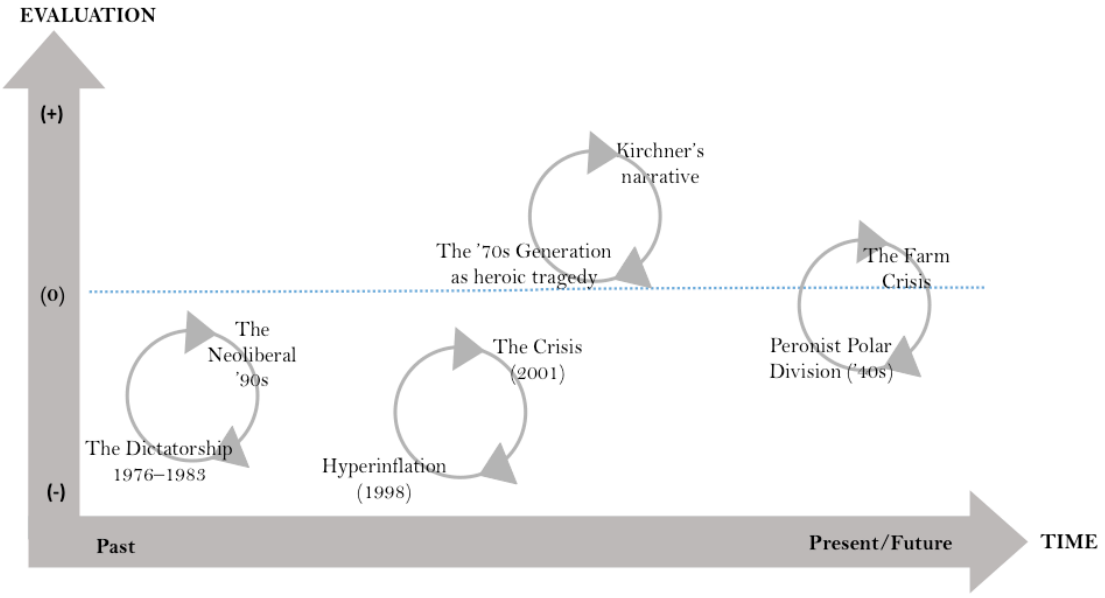
Emotional intensity and polar oppositions are well-known characteristics of Argentine political culture. Alejandro Grimson (2007) pointed out that Argentine is indeed framed by a 'dichotomy matrix' of several oppositions (Buenos Aires/Provinces, Whites/Blacks, Boca/River, Civilization/Barbarism). For sure, hitherto, all these oppositions crossed the country, especially the capital, Buenos Aires. Those born around 1990 were impinged upon by some of these oppositions in a particular temporal form: firstly, as a critical 'before and after' when remembering the economic crisis of 2001 (the nineties becoming polluted); then through the opposition between perpetrators and sacral/heroic victims of the last dictatorship via the new process of collective remembering in Nestor Kirchner's government; and later through the renewal of the Peronist-anti-Peronist opposition, thereby framing

their repertories of evaluation and dividing their young organizations into adherents or opponents.

Those divisions might be mitigated in the future when new events unleash new narrative plots. Indeed, as I recounted in previous chapters, the eighties illusion concerning 'true' democracy was recounted later as disillusionment in an ironic plot. Nonetheless, when I asked my young respondents about the future, the last division continues along two different projective lines: on the one hand, it appears as a hope of continuing to be committed to social justice. Here an intergenerational connection is fostered by linking political projects from the forties (classical Peronism), seventies (youth militancy) or eighties (the recovery of democracy) with their own civil or political engagement. On the other hand, it reveals itself either as a fear of being affected by a new crisis or being involved in a precarious and unstable economy (the ghost of a new crisis or hyperinflation). In the latter case, the symbolic weight of the 'economic memory' which circulates mainly in family conversations and the mass media is evident.

As a result, a cyclical sense of time was predominating by the time of my fieldwork, either as the eternal promise of a return to social justice or as the incessant burden of old nightmares. The cyclical emplotment (the eternal return of past divisions) might be considered the central evaluative clause of their narratives. The neoliberal project of the nineties was linked to the last dictatorship, the economic crisis brought back parents' stories of hyperinflation, the first years of the Kirchners' government brought back the canonical heroic tragedy of the seventies generation, and with the farm crisis, the country was marked by classical Peronist divisions and their emblematic figures (Figure 6). Not surprisingly, the 'we' of this generational narrative barely emerged since they better understood themselves as connected to past or social divisions (for instance, Luna, Luisa, and Natalia generally said: *we* middle-class young people). As I will show in the next chapter, this situation contrasts sharply with the widespread use of 'we, our generation' in the Chilean young generational site.

Figure 6
Cyclical plot-line



Every new event not only revived and linked some past circumstances, but also modified the image of past events. In this sense, the nineties became more evil after Kirchner's hyperbolic narrative, and the hyperinflation more crucial, since it anticipated a repetitive nightmare; the seventies generation more heroic and exemplar for present political struggles, and the emergence of Peronism in the forties more central to understanding Argentina's current political divisions. Last but not least, a popular market-oriented historiography has emerged in recent years (creating an extensive young audience) that attempts to recount an ever-lasting Argentine history of decadence as well Argentina's willingness to overcome difficult constellations.[82] The 200th bicentenary of the nation might have invigorated myths of 'patriotism' as well as of 'decadence' (Grimson 2012a).

Being entangled in a cyclical emplotment may require a special form of performativity: collective rituals. The latter are social performances par excellence where repetition and circularity take place (Alexander 2004, Giesen 1999, Turner 1995). The sequence of commemorations (of the dictatorship, national independence, as well as of 17 October) enhanced such an order of temporality. These commemorations were not only state-official commemorations but attended by thousands of people who occupied the public space. Furthermore, from the

[82] See the reaction of official historiography and the emplotment of this 'popular' literature in Seman et al. 2007.

Malvinas/Falklands War to the commemoration of the AMIA bombing, different rituals of mourning invaded Buenos Aires' streets and squares. Ultimately, the economic crises – from the hyperinflation to the meltdown of 2001 – were experienced as a liminal process.

Hence it would be not an overstatement to affirm that Buenos Aires city is an extremely ritualized society in terms of its massive and emotive performances within the public space. Every week groups demonstrate with songs and flags: students, teachers, gays and lesbians, trade unions and so forth at Plaza de Mayo or National Congress Square. Every football event is also experienced as a ritual (Boca Juniors stadium is regarded worldwide as the cathedral of football). Finally, the principal activity of family, friend and college meetings is a ritual of meat sacrifice (the grill). To sum up: if a cyclical emplotment requires highly collective ritualization, this is a beautiful case in point to prove it within modern societies.

Chapter 6
Santiago de Chile, 1986–1994: Generational disruption and the romantic plot

The present research aims to understand three sociological phenomena: firstly, the *generational building* of two age-groups in Chile and Argentina by means of their shared stories. My initial interest lies in examining how ordinary individuals connect their life stories by drawing on different public events experienced within their generational site. This synchronic approach is, secondly, complemented with a more diachronic dimension in which these stories are related (i.e. confronted, assimilated, compared) to *social memories* of older emblematic pasts (in particular right-wing dictatorships). By conducting interviews with people who grew up in post-dictatorial contexts, I have thus examined how these difficult pasts are recovered in order to create links with their respective generational narratives. Finally, both aspects are informed by *narrative mechanisms*, whereby biographical, generational and public stories are emplotted and evaluated. Contentious processes of meaning attribution and the role of canonical generations have hitherto been crucial for the modes of circulation of these narratives.

In the third and fourth chapters, I examined biographical accounts of people who grew up in Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile during the eighties. The aim was to introduce the stories circulating about the recovery of democracy in both countries - as defining events of their formative years - and follow sequences of disillusion and disenchantment. In Chapter Five I introduced narratives of young Argentineans in order to show how new political narratives – the canonization of the seventies generation in terms of a heroic tragedy as well as the revival of Peronism as a triumphant memory – invigorate, via collective rituals, the connection between past events and youth politicization.

All the narrative plots visualized (nostalgic, comical, consoling and cyclical) foster continuity between the generations, since 'canonical generations' maintain control over historical narratives and symbolical – temporal – boundaries. In Buenos Aires, the weight of the tragic past (either the dictatorship or the 'nineties') reinforces the linkage between generations via the widespread mission of collective remembering as well victimization as the main mechanism of intergenerational bonding. Among the older Chilean cohort, the canonical narrative of democratic transition promotes a future-oriented narrative (leave the past behind and look towards the future),

thereby gradually unleashing disenchantment along with past promises of truth and justice. Eventually, a consoling plot predominates. In the three cases there was an absence of the most ascribed characteristics of generations: novelty, breaking and disruption, or in other terms, generations as a mechanism of cultural creativity (Fietze 2009).

The present chapter provides for a counter-case to this trend of 'generational continuity' when offering an example of generational disruption. This chapter deals with stories circulating within the generational site of people born in Chile at the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties (1986-1992), i.e. people who grew up in a democratic context after 17 years of dictatorship. Two features are very salient here: a strong student movement critical of the educational system which has evolved since 2006, and a subtle reaction to the 'communicative silence' concerning the dictatorship. My analysis will show the extent to which both social events are connected.

The linkage of such a 'bitter past' with the cycle of student mobilization deserves special attention. If classical generational approaches are nourished by progressive emplotments – in which the 'horizons of expectation' are disentangled from older 'spaces of experience', to draw on Koselleck's terms, – the increasing weight of tragic narrativity in contemporary regimes of temporality (Alexander 2002, Eder 2005, Huyssen 2003, Olick 2007) might generate some kind of tension within this progressive sense of disruption. Indeed, I wonder why, in the Argentine context, the tragic narrative stimulates continuity as well as high youth political activism (the cyclical plot), whereas in the Chilean case a more 'acrimonious' and conflicting story predominates.

For this chapter I draw on 18 narratives interviews conducted in 2012 and ten autobiographical reports written in the same year. This is the only case for which I could gather written reports (see 2.1.1, footnote 19). The chapter is structured chronologically, from the transmission of the last dictatorship to the great wave of protests in 2011.

6.1 Historical boundaries: communicative silence and the queues

It might be uncontroversial to view the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of the democratic period as a meaningful historical threshold. Together with Allende's government (1970–1973) and the coup d'état in 11 September 1973, the plebiscite of 1988 and the return to democracy remain as intergenerational milestones for contemporary Chilean collective memory (Carvacho et. al 2013, M.A. Garretón 2003). Having been born in those years might imply a robust narrative point of focalization. Young interviewees easily drew such boundaries between the difficult past of their parents who lived under dictatorship and themselves who have no personal memory of this period. This simple exercise of demarcation is nourished by a grand narrative of the Chilean political culture: *you are* the first group coming of age in democracy and political freedom. Camila, for instance, reflects on this fact at the beginning of her writing:

"Being born in the 1990s meant arriving together with democracy, and with this, a series of joyful changes due to the simple fact that the Chilean population was able to have liberties that had been neglected for years. Therefore, in my family – left-wing oriented – these were regarded as good times." (Camila, 1990)

Camila echoes the 'joy story' of the transition as a final stage after years of oppression and political restrictions. As I have already noted in a previous section (4.7), the script 'the joy is coming' was the opposition's slogan in the plebiscite campaign of 1989. Camila stressed the point that this story comes from her upper-middle-class family who adhere to a (centre-)left tradition. Camila's remark retains two classical mechanisms of past transmission: family memories and their political narratives.

The bombardment of the government palace on 11 September 1973 opened up a polar – cold war – constellation between the centre left and the right (pro-military regime).[88] The consequence of this conjecture might until today awaken the image of Chile as a 'divided country' (Huneeus 2003). Such a clear division was evident in the plebiscite of 1988 when only 54% approved of an end to dictatorship and 43%

[88] This is of course a simplification. Different positions and dynamics inform the political field. See, for further details, M.A. Garretón 1988 and Roberts 2011.

approved of a continuation. The last presidential election in 2013 was a revival of such a division: the daughter of a general tortured and assassinated by the dictatorship (Michelle Bachelet) against the daughter of the air-force general who participated in the military junta in 1973 (Evelyn Matthey).

Such a polar constellation is, however, far from evident in ordinary narratives of young people. Regarding the classical clear division between right-left memories, my respondents told rather mixed and contradictory stories. The complexity is primarily found in the family circle. While grandparents transmit some memories, parents might recount other, sometimes divergent, aspects. Their fathers and mothers' lineages might also offer contradictory stories. Of course, there are family groups who are entirely right/left or from the political centre (Christian Democrats). But even in those lineages, a 'red' uncle may be cumbersome or a provoking and distant '*facho*' aunt disturbs homogenous memory patterns.

Still, this is a simple issue of heterogeneity. More revealing is the fact that all the interviews involved some form of *communicative silence* concerning the adult cohorts' experiences. Silence is one of the most revealing aspects of memory communication (Teeger and Vinitzki-Seroussi 2007, Winter 2010, Zerubavel 2006). In the Chilean stories, the *communicative silence* of the dictatorship might be entangled in five forms of narrativity.

The first one is linked to the 'structure of feeling' left behind by the dictatorship. Juana, born in 1987 in a low-class neighbourhood, illustrates this point plainly when referring to her mother: *"Very few stories are told about the dictatorship, my mom especially because she gets scared, she gets nervous, she doesn't like to speak about the dictatorship."* Fright and fear are among the most mentioned feelings reported by older cohorts when narrating dictatorship times. Ana, like the rest of my respondents, does not have relatives or family who were assassinated or tortured by the dictatorship. Indeed, that structure of feeling is not necessarily linked to direct experiences of violence (i.e. trauma), it is rather an appraisement (as a cognitive map) that certain ways of talking (antagonistic modes), social spaces (streets), times (the night) and performances (protests) should be avoided.

A second form of communicative silence is generated when the very idea of talking about the past evokes conflict and resentment (*rencor*). This moral code (resentment/ reconciliation) is based on the narrative template raised at the very beginning of the

democratic years: in order to heal our wounds we have to reconcile (see 4.7 above). According to some respondents, parents avoided speaking about the past in order not to cultivate resentment.

Communicative silence is also related to certain forms of family-table conversations. Mayarí, born in 1992, from a low-working-class district, adds a fascinating entry when expressing: "*In my home, nobody spoke about religion, neither politics nor football. These were not topics of dinner-table conversation.*" The three topics mentioned (politics, religion, football) are meaningful in that they give an idea of what might be regarded as conflictive in the Chilean capital. The contrast with Buenos Aires stories is notable when it comes to favourite topics at the Argentine dinner table. This pragmatic avoidance of conflict may refer to a more general concern about social conflict (Araujo and Martucelli 2012, PNUD 2004) as a long-standing consequence of the dictatorship. Yet, it might also emerge from a more distant source of discursive patterning in Chile's long history (Loveman and Lira 1999, 2000, 2007).

Rodrigo mentioned a similar situation in his – private and upper-class – schoolroom. Given the fact that the classroom is divided along the lines of memories of the past, teachers cannot sideline and put more emphasis on one memory spectrum. This might be the case for a great many schools due to state guidelines. As Reyes Jedlicky (2005) investigated, public school texts (at least until 2003, approximately the school years of my interviewees) pay more attention to the dictatorship's economic transformation and the difference from Allende's economic policies. Even though crimes against human rights were evident in school texts (supported by the truth commission report in 1991), teachers were prompted by government guidelines to restrict the period to economic changes and to only touch *very carefully* on other aspects of the period (Reyes Jedlicky 2005: 77–79).

A fourth form of communicative silence is visible in right-wing families that used to glorify the dictatorship as a time of progress, order and salvation from Salvador Allende's government (see Stern's emblematic memory of salvation, 2004: 7–38). Whereas a critical stance towards human rights violations committed under dictatorship has emerged in the last thirty years, those parents had fewer collective templates to justify their own evaluative codes. Bernardita, from an upper-class district, comments on her parents' silence:

"They supported the dictatorship; they felt they were saved by Pinochet. So (RF: in reference to human rights crimes), *instead of explicitly saying that they did not happen, they prefer not to talk about them, as if this negative side never existed." (Bernardita, 1989)*

Last but not least, the fifth form of communicative silence is what I call 'the generational argument'. This communicative silence is produced when older cohorts neglect the possibility of historical understanding by younger generations, since they did not experience what happened in the past (M.J. Reyes 2009): '*I* was there, *I* lived there, *you* cannot understand.' Ultimately, even if this understanding is confronted (see Cornejo et al. 2013), this argument produces silence as it blocks the continuity of conversation. Jay Winter called this form 'essentialist silence', "[O]nly those who have been there (…) can claim the authority of direct experience required to speak about these matters" (2010: 6). This mechanism is crucial and often employed by older generations after difficult pasts (e.g. in postwar Germany: "Du warst nicht dabei … Ihr könnt das nicht verstehen"; Kraft and Weißhaupt 2009: 27). The generational argument results in tension when different cultural supports (historical reports, films, TV reportage, novels) offer new templates through which young generations can break away from the authority of experience.

In all these cases, it was evident that the past was 'there'. The simple utterance 'I don't want to talk about that' or 'Please, don't talk about politics at the table' reinforces its presence. The silence became more evident when someone wants to speak about the past (an uncle/ aunt, a friend's parents, relatives of the victims and so on). Thus silence was a widespread form of narrativity, but never entirely dominant.

Diverse interviewees offered some tragic episode of people assassinated during the dictatorship to make sense of the historical past. Some young students from left-wing families developed extensive reports of what happened in the past and the crucial importance of regarding the parents' role in the struggle against dictatorship. Moreover, some sons of right-wing families try to defy the parents' story.[89] After different events of collective remembrance and 'irruptions of memory' (Wilde 1999), it was clear that the dictatorship was considered 'a bitter past' (Eder 2005). Indeed, as in the Argentina stories, the narrative evaluation of such a difficult past is

[89] The opposite never appears: son of the left-wing families trying to support the right-wing script.

significantly homogenous: for all of them, the dictatorship was a hideous time regarding victims' destiny. Nobody neglects this aspect and it might be considered the most transnational template of the southern cone: the right-wing dictatorships left as their legacy thousands of gruesome deaths.

Nevertheless, in contrast to the Buenos Aires stories, victims' tragedies appear to be distant, without historical focalization. That is, all respondents were conscious of the tragic past, but it was difficult to find some form of historical explanation for what happened. This is of course not due to a lack of historical knowledge. Rather, it is a consequence of a wider conflict over memory. The canonical narrative of the democratic transition attempted to leave the past behind and look towards the future. What is more, the weak position of human rights movements during the political transition – compared to the strong position of human rights movements during Alfonsín's and Kirchner's periods in Argentina – and the absence of 'sacral' victims, like the kidnapped children and their grandmothers in Buenos Aires, meant, as a result, the absence of historical narratives and symbolical supports for remembering. During the democratic transition, as Cath Collins stressed, "an active and generally well regarded human rights movements was not only sidelined but also decimated" (2013: 64). Ultimately, victims' stories were bound together, exclusively, to victims' relatives or encapsulated in leftist organizations.

One contentious example of these circumstances is knowledge of the number of victims. The majority of Chilean respondents had no idea of the number of people murdered. The number is not important as such, but if we contrast the presence of the symbolic cipher of 30,000 *desaparecidos* in Argentina (which speaks of the weight of the civil movement in Buenos Aires rather than a historical truth), the absence of references in Chile illustrates the lack of symbolic figures to recount the past.

Another example is offered by two upper-class respondents, from right-wing families, who although condemning dictatorship crimes, used a common rhetoric figure in order to speak about the victims: mitigation.

"I don't know how many but I know that they are fewer than those who died elsewhere. I believe that they are fewer than in other dictatorships." (Catalina, 1988)

"Three thousand persons approximately. I mean, for genocide, I believe that it is not so many. I believe that in Russia 50 million were killed." (Luis Felipe, 1988)

In this context, the most outstanding source of division seems to be stories related to economic events. If a homogenous and abstract template circulates about victims' destiny, stories about the economic situation of Chile are still controversial. The liminal point is the queues for food in the times of Allende's *Unidad Popular*. When describing why the coup d'état happened, the majority makes references to the food lines, thus becoming the historical boundary par excellence. Drawing on my life stories, Chilean contemporaneous memory seems to start in the queues. Why? Most likely because 'the queues' offer some sort of causality (fostered by the right): given the fact that the country was suffering food scarcity, someone needed to find a solution. In addition, the food queues offer some vivid memories of family involvement (he/she stood in the queue) which is indisputable as a biographical experience. This is visible when Soledad recounted the day on which she asked her father why he supported the dictatorship:

"My father's family was from the opposite side. Once I talked with my father and I asked him, "But why did you support Pinochet?" He told me that when he was a boy he had to stand in the food queues to buy bread, and he had to be there at 6am standing in a five-block long queue just to buy bread. So, from a kid's point of view, all that this was about was over (RF: without mentioning: it was a relief)." (Soledad, 1986)

The counter-template to neglect such an explanation is always based on historical sources: the right and the military boycotted Allende's government. That is, there seldom appears a counter-memory inscribed in family experiences/memories that neglects the queue. It requires a historical explanation, which is precisely neglected by older cohorts (I waited in the queue, you did not). As Cecilia, from an upper-class context and born in 1990, reported:

"I can talk with them, they are not going to shut me up, but they will tell me: "No, you are wrong." Their stance is rigid, that is, their standpoint is fixed 'they lived it vs you did not' (RF: adopting her mother's voice), *"You don't know what it meant to live there, you don't know what it meant for us to queue to get food." (Cecilia, 1990)*

Similar to the older cohorts' stories, the UP (Popular Unity) is the most contentious and conflictive space of semantic connotations hitherto (see Winn 2007). The description 'socialist and democratically elected government' is opposite to the depiction of a 'crazy, irresponsible, unbearable communist government'. They

opposed each other ubiquitously. Crucially, the negative description of Allende's government allows the continuation of a narrative in which the dictatorship offered something to the country: order and economic recovery.

All in all, the 17 years of dictatorship might be encapsulated as a time of horror and tragedy, but a very flat and distant one. What is still contentious and the source of subtle dispute is the previous government (Allende's time) and the consequences for subsequent years: their own generational site, that is, the democratic transition.

6.2 Childhood memories: narrative flattening of the nineties

Childhood memories contain blurry recollections intertwined with present repertories of evaluation. Thus people from different age cohorts attribute different meanings to recurring topics such as family activities, primary school, playing with friends and holidays. There are some settings which are particularly revealing for the emergence of these repertoires.

In the case of the Chilean young cohort, firstly, a great amount of their childhood memories concentrate on family dynamics. These stories included a large bunch of relatives (grandparents, cousins, uncles and so on) and different activities (holidays, playing together and so forth). In addition, there exist a great number of dramatic stories (fighting, the deaths of grandparents, divorces, illnesses, among others). The great variety of family characters and dynamics involved is also a characteristic of the Argentine stories. Yet, Chilean stories of childhood show some particular features (especially regarding low-middle-class interviewees). For instance, many of their forebears are not from Santiago and used to live or still live in the provinces. Thus holidays often involved a trip across Chile, visiting family. This simple detail stands for the great wave of internal migration to Santiago over the last century.

A further aspect is the absence (or again some communicative silence) concerning the father, grandfather or brother in their stories, given some previous conflict or abandonment. Jazmín describes the silent presence of her grandfather in the following terms:

"No, I don't know my grandfather, neither is he mentioned at home because he had a very troubled relationship with my grandmother, lots of violence (…) at home, no one talks about him." (Jazmín, 1990)

As a matter of fact, one of the most recurrent 'non-topics' reported by my respondents was a male's wrongdoing (in seven out of eighteen interviews, I counted some conflict around a brother, father or grandfather). There are multiple family 'elephants' living in the Chilean living room (Maturana 2000).

The second social site of childhood memories is primary school establishments. All these stories are characterized by an extreme social segmentation. The great inequality among Chilean families is primarily visible when the upper classes' memories start with stories from private (bilingual) establishments which later became their whole life-span school. Conversely, those who attended poorer public (or semi-private) establishments had to move to secondary schools (if they achieved good marks). Whereas Bernardita started narrating from her English school, Gonzalo recounted how half of his primary schoolmates ended up with problems concerning alcohol or drug abuse. Education will become an important topic of their youth narratives since the student movement precisely focused on these unequal life courses and patterns of exclusion.

A third recurrent subject was watching TV cartoons. Young Argentine respondents hardly brought up anything connected to time spent watching television. We have examined a similarly relevant role of television for the older cohort in Chile (4.4). Television used to play a significant role in family meetings (as a sharing activity), from the dictatorship onwards. Nonetheless, my young interviewees highlight a generational difference between them and much *younger* generations: 'their' cartoons were *quieter* compared to today's violent ones. As a result, their childhood was generally described as a time of simplicity.

Different generational experiences are evaluated under a code of simplicity/ostentation. A pristine example concerns stories related to the emergence of new digital devices: the first mobile phone, the first computer, the first games console. As in Buenos Aires, a generational distinction emerges between those who grew up partially under the domain of new technologies and those younger age cohorts who are *true* digital natives. Catalina enthusiastically affirmed that "*we* are the generation of transition", those who grew up without new 'technology' (what it

means: simplicity, purity, classical games). By contrast, new generations have lost the 'simplicity' and purity; they cannot enjoy the privilege of having been untouched by technology. Soledad, from a middle-class context, expressed her version of this story in the following terms:

"Our childhood was much more innocent than what you see nowadays (…) for example, I had a mobile phone in my second or third year of high school, as well as a computer. And I had Facebook only when I was at university. There was no risk of exposure to (...) individualism, a more violent world." (Soledad, 1986)

Soledad related the topic of the absence of technology with aggression and individualism. This negative image of a privatized society would somehow collapse with the mobilizations of 2006 onwards. Indeed, for those more engaged in later protests, the student movement would have the role of an *awakening*. Different respondents used the label 'our slumbering generation' to refer to their period of formation. As part of a widespread generational lexicon, Mannheim already refers to the previous phase of generational activation as a slumbering potential (Mannheim [1928] 1952: 309). The term seems fruitful to encapsulate evaluative codes (slumbered by individualism) and the drawing of temporal boundaries (slumber-awaken).[90] Raquel provides a narrative of 'slumbering' via the Internet, and 'awakening' via the protests of 2011:

"We are a generation who are less afraid to say what we think, a generation with more tools to express ourselves. A generation long slumbered by the Internet, by the technology, and I think that we were awoken again by the student revolution that we experienced in 2011. My generation locked itself to the computer, the mobile phones, and became more individualistic, thereby forgetting communitarian dreams. Technological evolution brought with it individualism and consumerism." (Raquel, 1987)

The metaphor of 'awakening' serves to distinguish 'them' from previous, more individualistic generations, or those who are still sleeping. Still, it also works as a figure of a cyclical rhythm in which civil society awoke, fell asleep and awoke again. Here, it seems that after a period of high social mobilization in the sixties and the protests against the dictatorship during the eighties, the civil society newly awoke in

[90] The leaders of the 2011 social movement will amplify or replicate exact terms. See Figueroa (2012: 72) and Jackson (2013: 16).

2006 (thereafter the nineties are a period of civil retraction; see this narrative cycle in Salazar and Pinto, 2002). However, the *nominalization* of 'technology' as a trigger of individualism occludes that form of political and historical narrative.

We should thus not conclude that they avoid the use of new digital devices. The 'techno-sociability' ascribed to this generation (PNUD 2010) appears as a *generational habitus* (Eyerman and Turner 1998). They experience high sociability through digitized media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp), thereby constituting part of their historical novelty (Corsten 2011).

All these childhood impressions never reached the negative level observed in the Buenos Aires stories. There is no connection between their biographies and 'evil neoliberalism' as in the Argentina post-crisis stories. This is important because it illustrates that the conjecture over the Argentine crisis in 2001 opens up the opportunity to reinforce different robust narratives about past periods (i.e. the entire nineties as an evil time). Compared to this latter post-crisis context, Chilean narratives are much flatter regarding the descriptions of the Argentine nineties.

A particular consequence of such 'flatness' might be the following. While there does not exist an overall tragic story of the 'nineties' (eventually, consumption and technology are positively narrated as part of their normal lives), we also miss a dominant triumphal story of democratization. If the first years of the nineties were remembered by the older cohort under the triumphal narration of the plebiscite, that charm seldom appears here. What is more, part of the progressive template of the older generations which makes possible the democratic transition also faded away (an exception is the faith put in education, see below). I would suggest that when the enchantment with the triumphal story of democracy disappears, the opportunity for a more tragic narrative might be opened up. This will be precisely one narrative mechanism employed by the social movement: linking the dictatorship to the present 'educational' tragedy.

Chile also underwent a difficult economic situation at the end of the nineties. It was less radical in comparison to the Argentine crisis of 2001. Still, two respondents from the upper class remembered their family situation after the Asian Crisis (1997–1998). For Juan Ignacio, the Asian Crisis and 9/11 were the more important events of his formative years. Interestingly, as in the whole sample of respondents, upper-class memories try to 'privatize' their stories, focusing on the family economy and

avoiding mention of difficult public events. In fact, by the time of the Asian crisis, a national as well as an international event occurred, namely, the capture of ex-dictator Augusto Pinochet in London. Neither of these two upper-class respondents mentioned it during the interviews, in spite of taking much time to describing the consequences of the crisis.

To be sure, few respondents saw Pinochet's capture as relevant. Those who remembered something related to it evoked only dim memories. Together with the presidential election of 2000 – offering the choice between a clear right-wing supporter of the dictatorship (Joaquin Lavin) and the socialist leader of the opposition against the dictatorship (Ricardo Lagos) – these events still form part of the parents' world division. Yet, it was impressive for them to see the continuous, re-emerging existence of old disagreements. Especially for those who would later be interested in politics or history, Pinochet in London was narrated as an *unconscious* moment in which they realized that something related to a heinous dictatorship past exists, a past which awakens hard emotions between adherents and opponents.[91]

Juan Ignacio's second event mentioned – the attack on the twin towers in New York on 11 September 2001 – was more shocking. No doubt, a vast majority of my young interviewees in Chile and Argentina referred to 9/11 as an impressive event, while only one person in the adult cohort mentioned it as crucial. Measured by surveys, the broadcast attack on several targets in the United States is one of the most important events mentioned worldwide by young people (Guichard and Enríquez 2011).

In general terms, there are fewer references in the Buenos Aires stories (one third is the proportion regarding the number of words employed to describe the event). The most likely explanation for these fewer mentions in Buenos Aires is that 9/11 coincides with the period of the economic crisis in 2001. In fact, the majority of young people remembered 9/11 precisely within the context of the crisis. Moreover, as Natalia explained to me, September 11 is a public holiday in Argentina – celebrating teachers' day – in honour of the ex-president and intellectual Domingo

[91] For the older generations, Pinochet in London was a key moment of renewal division, an outstanding 'irruption of memory' which disturbs the path of collective silence and the future-oriented narrative (see, among others, Collins et al. 2013, Hite 2007, Stern 2010, Wilde 1999, Winn 2007; and in terms of transitional justice, see the 'Pinochet Effect' in Brett and Collins 2008 and Roht-Arriaza 2006).

Faustino Sarmiento. As a result, young Argentine respondents were at home while the Chilean respondents remembered being at school. The impact of such different settings is fairly visible: the young Argentine people not only use fewer emotive descriptions, but also narrated the event in the first person (*I* was watching…), while for Chileans the most lasting impression was of watching together (*we* were *there*, watching together…). The difference between personal deixis (I/we) informs the relevance of the setting for future memories. For the Chilean respondents, it might be easier to 'remember together' with their coevals who experienced the same conditions (the school).

Evidently, this event is also framed by the commemoration of the coup d'état in Chile. Being an 'endless day' of contentious commemorations and violent incidents downtown and in the shantytowns (Candina 2002, Del Valle Barrera et al. 2013), this date is ubiquitously framed by the media and family conversation as the day on which 'something happens' (blackouts, street protests etc.). Even in schools, the atmosphere is more receptive than on normal days. Against this background, Elisa views 9/11 as being connected to some salient 'historical intersection' between her age, the coup d'état and the attack:

"In 2001 when the twin towers fell down, it was certainly a shock for us. I remember the impact of seeing on TV people falling from the towers. Likewise, it was weird to think that the 'twin towers' was on the same day as the coup in Chile. I don't know, it is strange to think about that, on the eleventh, because I was also eleven years old. Everything fitted together. My generation was eleven years old, September 11, 1973, September 11, 2001." (Karla, 1990)

6.3 Intermezzo: the subtle process of breaking the silence

My young respondents' biographical memories started *after* the first political attempt to come to terms with the dictatorship. As we examined in Chapter Four (4.7), the first years of Aylwin's government were vividly remembered as an intense debate about the past, with different commemorations taking place and the Truth Commission. The aim was to establish a process of coming to terms with the dictatorship's gruesome crimes, but at the same time to enforce a process of reconciliation. Nonetheless, after the murder of an important civil representative of the dictatorship – Jaime Guzman – "the ritual of reconciliation failed" (Güell and

Lechner 2006:25), thereby unleashing a period of public silence ended only by Pinochet's imprisonment in London (Hite 2007). Young respondents were not framed (at least not so strongly) by the canonical narrative of this first process of coming to terms with the dictatorship. As a result, the narrative of reconciliation does not form part of their repertories of evaluation (M.J. Reyes 2007).

Nevertheless, their understanding of a difficult past might have been modified when the image of the dictatorship was subtly re-framed over the last ten years. Indeed, from 2000 onwards, different processes and events of remembrance have changed the image of the last dictatorship. Let me consider at least four of them: i) a great number of trials as well as a new truth commission, ii) the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the coup d'état, iii) the final 'pollution' of Pinochet's image, and iv) the opening of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights.

I) According to Cath Collins, "By 2012 Chile had compiled one of the most active and complete records of judicial accountability anywhere on the continent, and perhaps in the world" (2013:61). Although Collins allocated the start of such procedures at the very beginning of the dictatorship, it is undeniable that they have increased since the arrest of Pinochet in London in 1998.[92] This initially seems to be similar to Argentine's path of transitional justice. Steve Stern in fact concludes in his three-volume oeuvre that in spite of different democratic transitions and political cultures, Chile and Argentina had arrived at the same point: "From a wider comparative perspective a certain convergence effect also took hold and set the countries apart from other cases" (Stern 2010: 334). Such convergence – according to Stern – is a result of a synergy between civil society action (human rights organizations) and the state.

This synergy was visible, for example, when a new truth commission was established by Ricardo Lagos' government in 2003 (Stern 2010: 286-297; see 4.7 for the first commission that took place in 1991), in which cases of torture and political imprisonment were investigated. The final report documented 27,255 such cases (later, in 2011, another commission raised the number to 40,018 victims).

[92] See Stern (2010: 246-277) and Wehr (2009: 112-114). For a deep understanding of the Chilean cultural legalist tradition and particular strategies which pave the way for such a boost, see Collins 2013. It is important to remark that Pinochet symbolically concentrates a great part of transitional justice. Therefore, the failed attempt to jail him probably unleashed a widespread feeling of impunity in Chile (in spite of the number of trials against others officials or members of the armed forces).

However, it is quite impressive that neither the trials nor this new commission were mentioned in the interviews as memory supports for respondents' recovery of the past. Similarly, Arnoso et al. 2012 found that young cohorts had the least knowledge about the truth commissions, but nevertheless showed the greatest interest in learning and knowing about the past.

The point is that a considerable difference remains between Chilean and Argentinean public memories. Certainly, in both cases, there is a homogenous rejection of human rights crimes. However, Chile has never seen the consolidation of a canonical narrative – as it has emerged in Kirchner's time since 2003 – in which the past must not only be remembered but also depicted as a model for subsequent generations. In 2003, President Ricardo Lagos elaborated a new human rights policy in which the weight of the progressive narrative was still present. In the summarizing sentence employed by the president – 'there is no tomorrow without yesterday' – we find the classical template of Chilean transition (look towards the future). Certainly, the script of the nineties, 'leave the past behind', is shifted to 'learning from the past' – which is indeed a profound narrative transformation – but the aim is still future reconciliation and national unity (Ríos 2003; for different rhetorics of learning see Forchtner 2014).

II) The year 2003 saw the constitution of the aforementioned commission and Ricardo Lagos's new policy – as well as the thirtieth anniversary of the coup d'état. Like the twentieth anniversary of the coup in Argentina (1996), this was one of the most central events for breaking the public silence and modifying certain meanings of the difficult past (Winn 2007: 12).[93] It is plausible that the disapproval of human rights crimes became more widespread in the public sphere after that (Rios 2003 and Winn 2007). There were massive media events (documentaries) and public debates (Stern 2010: 279–297). Alexander Wilde claims that: "[t]he largest swell occurred in 2003, the 30th anniversary of the 1973 military coup, when the mainstream media devoted unprecedented coverage to reflection on Allende's and Pinochet's rule" (2013: 47).

[93] Nevertheless, this commemoration was seldom mentioned (and the 1996 and 2001 commemorations in Argentinean young reports also did not appear). I suppose that the commemoration of 2013 – the fortieth anniversary of the coup d'état – had similar symbolic weight for this Chilean generation as the thirtieth anniversary of the Argentine dictatorship in 2006 had for young Argentine life stories. All in all, the commemorations in Chile and Argentina have been key turning points in mnemonic battles (Jelin 2002, 2007; for a lucid theoretical perspective of commemorations, see Vinitzky-Seroussi 2009).

One of the most innovative aspects of 2003 was the symbolic purification of Salvador Allende. (Del Valle et. al 2013:111, Stern 2010:284, Wehr 2009:116, Winn 2007:23). After decades of being 'polluted' by the centre and the right, Allende was bestowed with a new symbolic standing as a heroic – democratic – martyr. The socialist President Lagos re-opened the door through which Allende used to leave the government palace (it was closed by the military junta).

Tellingly, during the marches of 2011, Allende would reappear as a mythical hero. The marches would be narrated as the fulfilment of Allende's last speech in which he envisaged the re-opening of the great *alamedas* (a metaphor for 'avenues' but also the name of the large downtown avenue in which many of the protests took place). Without the 2003 rehabilitation, this image might not have emerged in 2011 as strongly as it did. Notwithstanding, whereas Allende's image was purified, the time of *Popular Unity* remains contested.

III) In parallel to the modification of Allende's image – especially in the case of younger generations – runs the process of Pinochet's pollution. His imprisonment in London and his much criticized return to Chile pave the way for a final moral sentence. In turn, the commemoration of 2003 showed a tactical detachment from the right (his classical helpers), thereby avoiding mentioning him as precursor; the commission on torture and imprisonment as well as the hundreds of trials pushed forward by human rights organizations ultimately polluted his reputation. Nonetheless, one of the most central processes of pollution took place during 2005, when a judge enacted a procedure against Pinochet for 'tax evasion'. I have already focused on the role of 'economic memory' as a justification of the coup and as a remnant of memory divisions. Indeed, the last positive component of Pinochet's image, amongst his followers, was the character of the 'good, uncorrupted dictator'. The emergence of a case of hiding bank accounts and corruption polluted his image amongst many of his followers. Steve Stern supports this when stating that "[b]y August 2006, the Riggs Bank revelations of fraud, the Valech report on torture, and the indictments for human rights crimes had worn down the loyalist core to only one of eight Chileans (12 per cent)" (2010: 302). This was also evident in my interviews. All the young people who had parents who strongly supported Pinochet's mission

('saved the country from communism and barbarians') had a different evaluation by the time of the interview.[94]

IV) None of the above was, however, as significant to my respondents as their visit to the Museum of Memory and Human Rights (half of my youth cohort went around it, none of the adult respondents). Even though it is too early to evaluate the relevance of the museum, which opened in 2010, in the last year of Michelle Bachelet's government, its impact can already be assessed as impressive. Even though two persons were sent by university professors, the rest of them attended the museum for personal reasons (even 'curiosity' was mentioned). Many of the respondents claimed that their parents had not, and most likely will never, visited the museum due to either the 'generational argument': 'I experienced, the period I don't need a museum to have an idea of what we lived through' or for political reasons: 'It is a left-wing version of history.' As a matter of fact, according to the ex-director of the museum, Ricardo Brodsky, 80 per cent of visitors are under thirty years old.[95]

The museum began with the day of the coup d'état and ended with the 1991 speech of President Aylwin in the national stadium. Contentiously, the museum left out previous periods of political radicalization (unleashing a public discussion by the right in 2012, see Collins and Hate 2013: 152–156) in order to concentrate on human rights violations. The museum is a fully documented, visual space which "guides the visitor through displays on torture, exile and solidarity, media censorship and collusion, popular resistance, prison artwork" (Collins and Hate 2013: 155).

Besides this content-related information, four of my respondents focused on another museum section, namely, the section on children and infants as victims of the dictatorship ('The pain of the children', image No. 11, next page). All the museum sections carry a special emotional burden, yet this section affects young respondents in particular. Marianne Hirsh has affirmed that "less individualized, less marked by the particularities of identity, children invite multiple projections and identifications"

[94] Still, at the burial of Pinochet in 2006, a good part of the economic and right-wing elite showed its final support. See Joignant's (2013) analysis of the symbolic battle around the funeral.

[95] Personal communication (29 July 2014). Although this is an impression, as the museum is free of charge (without registration), the latest statistics for guided visits demonstrate that 39% of the visitors are pupils (secondary school), 16% university students, 6% primary school students, 18% foreign, only 15% adults and 6% communitarian organizations (*Informe Audiencias* 2014).

(2012: 142), albeit running the risk of 'infantilizing the victim' (Hirsch 2012: 140-145). Following Hirsh's reflection on children's images as post-memories, it seems that children figures promote a greater sense of empathy and identification, whereas more politicized (and male) victims might disturb the more distant and flat stance towards the victims.[96]

Image 11
The Pain of the Children

Source: http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museo_de_la_Memoria_y_los_Derechos_Humanos

The great relevance attributed to the museum points to the invisibility of other sites of memory (just one person mentioned Villa Grimaldi, a major centre for torture and a crucial site of memory for human rights organizations). This absence signalled a common indifference to victims' relatives and the struggle conducted by human

[96] Another important visual memory support for this period was the film Machuca (Andres Wood 2004) which precisely reconstructed Popular Unity and the coup d'état via three children's stories. The film was extremely popular and according to Steve Stern, "youths who had not lived through the era proved intensely interested. The film served as a generational memory bridge of sorts. Many sent e-mail messages to Wood and declared the film helped them understand their parents better" (2010: 310). Other relevant films about this period, and close to victims' stories (such as Patricio Guzmán's filmography), have never obtained a great public audience, and were never broadcast by public television.

rights organizations, thereby shedding light on the distance from the issue of human rights. As Collins and Hite claim: "In fact, with the possible exception of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights, virtually no commemorative projects to date can claim to have successfully captured the attention and imagination of the Chilean public (…) A much-trumpeted memorial to women victims of the dictatorship, inaugurated in 2006 just days after Pinochet's death, was successively neglected, abandoned, and then comprehensively vandalized over the months and years that followed. Even apparently successful projects such as Villa Grimaldi and Paine seem relatively little known outside their immediate circles of participants, supporters, and human rights activists" (2013:140). By the same token, while in Buenos Aires, young respondents remembered a renewed debated in their families and schools since 2003, nothing similar occurred amongst the Chilean respondents, at least until 2011. The four aforementioned processes of remembering remain a distant object of communication.

Pierre Nora maintains that "[a] generation is a product of memory, an effect of remembering. It cannot conceive of itself expect in terms of difference and opposition" (1990: 520). Certainly, this generation is the product of this subtle process of consolidation of the national tragedy. In spite of processes of mitigation and the distant and flat evaluation, the national tragedy has been invigorated. The nineties canonical script of 'leaving the past behind' is rather avoided. Still, Nora also affirms that "generations are powerful, perhaps even primarily, fabricators of *lieux de mémoire*, or mnemonic sites which form the fabric of their provisional identities and stake out the boundaries of their generational memories" (1996 [1992]: 526). In the following, I will attempt to make visible how this generation is also a 'fabricator' of memories, defying canonical – temporal – boundaries.

6.4 Secondary school and the 'penguin' revolution

Generational stories emerge from particular settings and networks. One predominant setting from which young Chilean stories arise is secondary schools. The modern meaning of youth is strongly related to educational spaces. Through them, a story of independence from the family circle can evolve while peer networks flourish. Contemporaneous institutionalized life courses are impinged upon by the

universalization of school as an obligatory social path (Eisenstadt 1996, Mayer 2004).

In the Chilean case, the most significant feature is social segmentation. This issue refers not only to the content of stories (unequal conditions provoked by a class-structured system), but particularly the narrative focalization of their life stories. That is, in order to recount their school time, respondents always offered some clarification regarding where they studied (private school, semi-private, emblematic public school, or lower public school). The place automatically clarifies their social position. School allocation orients their stories without any further detail being required. By simply offering a few remarks on their educational establishment, the audience will recognize their life-course path.

A second aspect is subtler, yet crucial. When recounting his first days at secondary school, Manuel, from a middle-class context, remembered a feeling of disgust with regard to spending all his lifetime at school. As a meaningful turning point, he recalled the implementation of the 'full school day', a public reform affecting especially public as well as semi-private schools. For Mayarí, growing up in a working-class southern district, from secondary school onwards, school became his main life setting:

"I changed my day completely, the school day was from 8am until 5pm in the afternoon. I had lunch there, I practically did my life there." (Yolanda, 1990)

This public reform was announced in 1996 and gradually enacted in subsequent years. Although it was already common for upper-class students, it signified a portentous change of life-course trajectories for middle- and lower-class students: they began to spend the entire day at school (Cox 1997: 16–17). As a result, the school became a crucial platform for their biographies. The notorious participation in school activities – from religious, artistic and sport-related to political ones (e.g. the development of student councils) – might be related to the increasing availability of time and the predominance of school as a life setting. Secondary school is precisely remembered as a space of creating horizontal networks of peers.

The significant augmenting of time within schools runs parallel to another important life-course modification. As a political goal of democratic governments, there was increasing enrolment into secondary schools, reaching 93.7% of the young

cohort in 2003 (Cox 2006: 7). All my respondents attended secondary school, which signifies a major shift compared to older cohort interviewees who, if belonging to the lower class, had to leave school early in order to work or help at home.

A last feature relates to our concern about the narrative templates circulating in these spheres. The growing enrolment in secondary school as well as the large numbers of students finishing secondary school put, as a result, greater pressure on middle-class students to enter university. This pressure is very clear when remembering parents' wishes about their future. Manuel evoked her mother's desire as follows: "*My mother's dream was always that I would go to university, probably because nobody in the family had attended university before*". As in Manuel's account, for many respondents this was a genealogical rationale: you are the first member of the family who has all the opportunities to finish secondary school and attend university.

This middle-class template (the upper class was already conscious of the educational mechanisms of distinction) is particularly informed by one macro-narrative. I have examined the role of the future-oriented narrative in order to frame memory conflicts at the beginning of the nineties: leave the past behind and look towards the future (4.7). This narrative uncovers a second dimension when analysing young people's stories. Look towards the future conveys the hope of a better world. In Koselleck's terms, a progressive narrative entails a detachment of the 'space of experiences' from the 'horizon of expectations' (Koselleck 1979). The past must no longer guide the future and the latter is open to new possibilities (progress). In the realm of the Chilean educational promise, the parents' space of experience must not constrain their sons and daughters' horizons of expectation (university). As a result, schools and the university system were burdened with the future expectations unleashed by that narrativity. The failure of the promise – or consciousness of its impossibility – would create a critical conjecture.

These preliminary features played a key narrative role: more time, more peer networks, and more 'symbolical pressure' within a class-structured educational system. Eventually, their school stories evolved around the large wave of student mobilization. Although, for my respondents, the most defining event was the protests that occurred during 2011, these latter demonstrations are always linked to the secondary school protests of 2006. Those previous protests were coined the 'penguin student movement' or 'penguin revolution' due to the resemblance of the

student uniforms to seabirds (for a full account, see in particular S. Donoso 2013a, 2013b).

It was somewhat difficult to narrate the 'penguin revolution' as those memories coalesce with more recent stories of 2011. These latter stories are indeed 'fresher' and seem more salient. Moreover, a great number of my respondents did not take part in that student movement.[97] For my oldest interviewees – who will mark the 2011 events as defining – they were already in the first year at university. In addition, much of the mobilization took place around emblematic public schools or other middle-class establishments. Hence low-class and upper-class respondents had fewer biographical experiences and stories to recount.

Sofía Donoso has further illuminated symbolical boundaries between the public middle class school (us) and the private upper class (them) in protest catchwords. Donoso asserts that: "'everything for them, nothing for us' – was perhaps one of the Pingüino movement's most succinct catchphrases" (S. Donoso 2013a: 17). Nonetheless, there were some private school students' memories of participation. Some respondents recalled gathering in schoolyards to support public establishments as well as conducting a discussion season; however, they never joined protests. It was rather a sort of distant linkage. Most of the upper-class respondents nonetheless reported living in a 'bubble' at that time.

For some lower-class respondents the student moment had no relevance. Mayarí did not mention anything connected to it during her interview. At the end, asked about her coeval performances, she expressed her awareness of the student movement, but she did not bestow on it any significant meaning for her life story. Indeed, she expressed a counter-story when claiming: *"What for? There are kids whose parents pay for their studies and they go to protest without even knowing what the issue at stake is (….) Maybe they are looking for something obvious, that is, free education. But, not everything can be free in life. Besides, when things have a cost you appreciate them more."* This is the most widespread right-wing liberal template circulating via the media and reproduced by upper- and low-class interviewees.

[97] Furthermore, there was another precursory student mobilization that nobody mentioned, namely, the *mochilazo* in 2001 (Donoso 2013a). To be sure, my respondents were too young to have participated in that event. Sill, what is relevant, narratively speaking, is that the origin of the student cycle of protests has been recurrently framed as starting in 2006 by the leaders of 2011 (e.g. Jackson 2013) as well as documentary films (*La primavera de Chile*, 2012).

Nevertheless, a vast proportion of the respondents had a clear awareness of the 'penguin revolution' and mentioned it as crucial. The story pattern circulating about this event can be reconstructed as follows: all respondents stated that the story began around the sit-ins of the public establishment. This is the setting in which secondary students from the public are central protagonists while university students only later join street marches. For my interviewees, this first student uprising involved in particular a demand for 'better education' (i.e. better quality). This goal crystallised the progressive narrative in which a high level of education (a university degree) represents the central resource in order to achieve a fairer society (as well as mobility for middle-class families). Thus, through sit-ins and street protests, secondary students opposed those who wanted to maintain a private market system and privileged access to university establishments. The protests diminished over time as some legal modifications were achieved – though there was no clear triumph to be celebrated by the students. Retrospectively, the sequence of 2006 appears as the beginning of a (romantic) hero's adventures – even if it is only via the protests in 2011 that this hero truly emerges.

This narrative template might be modified when an active participant of the student movement narrates the same sequence. Gonzalo was engaged in the school movement and spent several nights in sit-ins. He stresses the concrete purpose of the student movement at that time, in that it was not only desired to have 'a better education' in general but to put forward specific demands such as the school transportation pass, the lowering of university entry exam fees, and improvements to the infrastructure of public schools. In addition, Gonzalo evoked a focus on law modification – the LOCE[98] as well municipalisation regulations – as the later movement's goal. As Gonzalo commented, one of the main slogans of the movement was 'down with the LOCE' (*abajo la LOCE*). The regulatory framework represents, symbolically, the linkage between Pinochet's legislation and the present-day education system of the democratic regime.[99]

[98] Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza – Organic Constitutional Law on Teaching. The shift from an initial, particular demand to the later regulatory modification is interpreted by social movement scholars as 'frame amplification' (S. Donoso 2013a: 17).

[99] I have already examined this regulatory framework in the context of the 'failed memory' of the student movement of 1986-1987 (4.5). The reform established local authorities (municipalities) as supervising and financing public schools. Given spatial-social segmentation, poor and middle-class people received less public funding and fostered private education.

Finally, Gonzalo recalled Bachelet's government's alleged solution (an expert commission and a new *weak* regulatory law) as a false step which paved the way for the protests of 2011. For those more engaged in the protests of 2006, such as Gonzalo, ex-President Bachelet, together with all the political actors (from the centre left to the right) became 'false heroes' who did not go far enough with their (too) *weak* regulatory law in 2008.[100]

Gonzalo's more specific depiction of the goals of the social movement is related to his experience as a participant in school sit-ins and his wider political engagement. In contrast, a majority of the respondents narrate the 2006 protests from a certain distance and especially under the evaluative code of 2011. Moreover, taking Benford's distinction between 'participant' and 'movement' narratives (2002: 54), the story of the 'penguin revolution' appears to be intensively recounted only as a 'participant narrative', while the 2011 'movement narrative' circulates among a much wider audience.

Still, even those who had not participated in the 'penguin revolution' saw, for the first time, that people (their coevals) march and protest. Soledad, who was attending the first year of university at that time, and who will be heavily engaged in 2011, stressed precisely this:

"I believe that it was the first great demonstration that I saw. Because you knew through stories that there had been other periods in which people used to protest, to strike, but you had been told about this." (Carla, 1986)

Soledad's linkage to older periods of protest and demonstration points to two phenomena. First, the narration has the meaning of recovering something (i.e. the tradition of an active civil society). This is normally related to parents, relatives or even teachers' struggle against dictatorship ('you had been told about this'). On the other hand, the narration hints at the disruption provoked by the student movement (the beginning of the awakening). This second aspect is regularly encapsulated in the catchphrase *'we are the generation without fear'*. This sentence, or similar ones ('we don't have fear any longer'), was often employed by the 2011 movement leaders (e.g. Camilo Vallejo in Ouviña, 2012). Yet, it is highly probable that the sentence was

[100] Particularly, the centre-left coalition 'the Concert' which governed until 2010 was thereafter polluted. See the origins of the coalition in Chapter Four. For Bachelet's and the centre-left process of becoming a false hero in term of student leaders' desires, see Grau 2011.

already circulating in 2006. Somma reported that "a blanket hanging from the wall of an occupied high school building in 2006 (…) claimed: 'we are the generation that was born without fear'" (2012: 299).

The catchphrase would be repeatedly employed and become a generational mark (Cárdenas and Navarro 2014: 80-85, Cortés and Castro 2014). It functions as a temporal and moral boundary: 'without fear any longer' draws a double distinction between a before and an after (fear provoked by the dictatorship vs the current social protests), and between those paralyzed by fear (older cohorts) and them (awakening). Protests that occurred either during the nineties or in the same year (e.g. copper workers' demonstrations in 2006) were not mentioned, thus reinforcing the image of awakening and uniqueness.

6.5 The protests of 2011 and reflexive nostalgia

The period between the *'revolución pingüina'* in 2006 and the protests of 2011 may be considered a quiet time. For social-movement scholars the explanatory links between both events are inscribed in the history of the student movement itself (the development of new student organizations, political conjecture and a process of collective framing, among others factors; see S. Donoso 2013b, Ruiz 2013, Salinas and Fraser 2012).

Following my respondents' life-course trajectories, those years are defined by enrolling in university in the case of 12 out of 18 participants. Other interviewees entered tertiary or technical institutions, studying for one or two years. Many of them could not afford even one year of study. They had to begin working. Furthermore, a great number of them enrolled in private institutions. This choice matches a new state policy concerning financial access to university. As Alexis mentioned, during those years a new state credit (*Crédito con Aval del Estado*) was implemented. Through this credit, students gained access to loans not only for public universities (as used to be the case), but the entire university system (that is, including private institutions). The formula to augment student participation was achieved by modifying the sources of credit: instead of the state, the financial system would provide sufficient resources for middle-class families. As a result, many of my interviewees not only entered private universities, but also became burdened with

debt. Around 2011 – when the first cohort taking this credit left university – the process of indebtedness was quite visible to families and students. The progressive narrative of the first generation studying thus faltered.[101] Indeed, what was promulgated as a progressive public policy (augment coverage via the financial system) would become a symbol of *neoliberal policies* (i.e. henceforth a process of nominalizing the 'villain': neoliberal policies).

In addition, a great many respondents started getting involved in some civil organizations (related to university or otherwise). The time between the protests of 2006 and 2011 seems to have been an intense period of civil engagement and networking processes. The organizations mentioned are multiple. Gervacio became involved in a cultural center for artistic circus, organizing activities in shantytowns; Manuel became president of the student council at his private university; Soledad and Pedro were actively participating in a student political organization; Raquel and Rodrigo continued to be active in scout organizations (all of them would participate with their groups in the protests of 2011). Jazmín and Jorge took an active role in their religious parishes. Ana joined a neighbourhood organization seeking housing solutions. Catalina participated in Lebanese youth after the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War (a particularly traumatic migrant memory recounted just by her).

Still, six out of 18 respondents never participated in any organizations and spent more time networking with friends or in family activities. As usual, a non-participatory role is found to be more present in upper- and lower-middle-class groups.

The actor absent from the organizations mentioned is political parties. Only Gonzalo joined the communist youth – only to retire after 2006 as he became tired of hierarchical commands. Afterwards, he preferred to participate in his neighbourhood organization and the student moment at his university. Compared to previous generations, the absence of political parties is salient. Remember that, in Chapter Four, people enthusiastically enrolled in political parties when the dictatorship allowed them. Catherine Hite's description of the role of political parties for the canonical generation of the sixties is revealing: "There is no greater organizational referent for Chilean political activists than their political parties. The party

[101] This goes hand in hand with the poor quality of some private institutions which diminishes the hope of a better future (Mayol and Azócar 2011: 5).

constitutes the central institutional network in which individual political actors are embedded" (2000:16). Young respondents engaged in the 2011 protests evaluated their performances as a revival of politicization ('without fear any longer'), but regularly stay outside of the classical party system (political elites have already become 'false heroes'). This contrasts not only with Chilean canonical forms of doing politics but also with the Argentine revival of the Peronist tradition under Kirchner's left-wing government (see Section 5.6).

One event before the 2011 protests frequently mentioned as disturbing and triggering an extraordinary number of anecdotes and feelings was the earthquake of 2010. Every generation in Chile has an earthquake to recount, as I have already shown with the older cohort. Amongst different memories (the sudden trembling; the furious shaking of the ground, houses, apartments and buildings and, subsequently, the uncertainty over relatives' circumstances), I would highlight one version in which their civil engagement and the protest of 2011 is connected. For Carla, the central consequence of the earthquake was to build, with fellow students, houses and support those affected. This networking of youth solidarity functions – narratively speaking – was an antecedent for the events that took place the next year.

Turning to the events of 2011, a common narrative pattern is used which is much more robust and widespread than in 2006. Whereas, in 2006, the beginning of the story was located in the sit-ins in public schools, in 2011 it was all about street demonstrations. The marches establish the beginning as well as the narrative setting. Moreover, the 2011 protests convey a strong feeling of 'being there, doing history'. Especially in the case of those who did not take part in 2006, the protests of 2011 became highly emotional. As Gervacio recounted:

"I remember the first demonstration (…) I had never taken part in anything and I really wanted to go, to feel self-fulfilled (laughing). And maybe to live this experience (was) more (important) than the actual cause behind it. At the beginning, even when I shared the ideals and everything, at the beginning it was like 'I want to live this, I want to be in a march'" (Gervacio, 1986).

The marches were particularly remembered as being massive, thereby enhancing the idea of a powerful 'we, without fear any longer'. The crowd and the (national) effervescence of the multitude remained central. A special focus was put on the large

number of artistic innovations at every demonstration. Here, the body became the object of self-painting, the carrier of customs, diverse artistic happenings and flash mobs. Raquel's two brothers took part in a flash mob in front of the government palace in which dozens of young people danced Michael Jackson's Thriller, standing for the death of both public education as well as their biographies (burdened with debt). Soledad remembered people marching in a grey rainy day when everyone carried an umbrella (named the 'march of the umbrellas'). Gervacio always participated dressed as a clown, giving different artistic performances.

Even though one of the most repeated words to evaluate the atmosphere experienced was that of *carnival*, every demonstration ended with violence which was either caused by the police or by 'hooded protesters'. The latter figure, however, became disliked by the majority of protesters who framed themselves as peaceful and reasonable actors (I will return to this opposition in the discourse of the civil sphere below).

In addition, sharing information and reporting meeting points via Facebook and Twitter is recounted as a key element of the protest experience. The networking process via the aforementioned tools stimulated the idea of 'our' historical novelty (Corsten 2011). Further, the simultaneous occurrence of other protests worldwide (Arab revolution, the occupy movements in Spain and New York, protests in Turkey) gave the impression of a global protest connected via those digitals channels.

The protagonists of the marches were mainly university students, as their leaders were presidents of university confederations.[102] Still, many of them commented on the fact that secondary students, as well as students at private universities and private schools, participated. Hence, in comparison to 2006, the protagonists became more powerful, providing the basis for a deictic (us) nominalization. Indeed, the massive experience of students demonstrating fosters an image of a *cross-cutting*

[102] There were various university leaders. Yet, the national and worldwide press focused particularly on Camilo Vallejo (Universidad de Chile), the "world's most glamorous revolutionary" (New York Times, 5 April 2012) as well as Giorgio Jackson (Universidad Católica). There is a narrative tension related to the 'subject' construction, given the attention paid to university students (see Salinas and Fraser 2012: 22). Simonsen (2012) attempts to recover the voice of high-school students.

performance regarding social class.[103] It is reiterated that *our* generation awoke and left behind both *our* period of slumbering and *their* period of fear. Therefore, the event might be easily referred to as a 'generational' one.

Throughout the marches, the desire for 'public, free, and high-quality education' (or 'fairer access to public education') gained support. As various respondents mentioned, the attention to 'free and public' is connected to the demand for the 'end of profit' as well as the recovery of the state as guarantor of social rights. Increasingly, this demand would coalesce with a more collective desire for managing other previously privatized sectors (especially health and social security). Thus, as Salinas and Fraser pointed out, "students began to describe themselves as representing the interest of society as a whole" (2012: 31). The active participation of children, adults and old people in the protests as well as social support via surveys (a survey registered 79% of support in September 2011) boosted this metonymic feeling.

The most visible aspect of their demands – resonating with life-course paths and family conversations – concerns the mounting process of indebtedness. The student movement reveals the ridiculous levels of debt within the financial system, thereby interrupting the promise of the progressive narrative (a better future through the possibility of social mobility). As the moral point of the story, the construction of a more egalitarian society contrasts with the high levels of inequality due to educational differences. The student protests aimed at offering a better future for future generations (illustrating the hero's altruism).

A large extent of the consolidation of 'us' takes place around the emergence and visibility of a villain. The first right-wing, democratically elected president (Sebastían Piñera) appears to be the perfect 'other', given his past as a millionaire entrepreneur and representing a section of society which backed the dictatorship. While the education minister (Joaquin Lavin), became the villain's buffoon due to his foolish wrongdoings (Lavín baptized 2011 as the 'year of higher education' while proposing new market-oriented reforms, thereby unleashing the first protests), the interior ministry became the villain's henchman in charge of repressing the movement.

[103] See Fietzte (2009: 104-106) for the relevance of the concept of cross-cutting for generational building.

Drawing on frame theory, social-movement scholars have analyzed the new government as the key turning point which "altered the structure of political opportunities" (Salinas and Fraser 2012: 35). Narratively, the figure of the villain is a key factor when unleashing more powerful forces of resistance (i.e. a more romantic and heroic subject). The combat between the generational protagonist and his enemy framed the story, "creating an 'us-versus-them' scenario where 'us' signified 'the people' asking for basic educational rights, and 'them' signified the government denying those rights" (Salinas and Fraser 2012: 32). Furthermore, centre-left groups and large sections of the elite (false heroes) opposed substantial reforms. As such, the student movement would become detached from the 'old' canonical divisions (enhancing the generational distinction).

No doubt, some respondents did not take part in any protests. Ana was having her first daughter and was concerned with housing protests in her low-class neighbourhood. Other interviewees – particularly upper-class and right-wing families – viewed the student movement as raising legitimate demands but carrying them out via 'incorrect forms' (protests or sit-ins). Interestingly, the narrative of the student movement (the good hero vs a powerful villain) seems not to be contested. Still, this idea of 'incorrect forms' was a particular evaluative clause circulating in upper-class circles and some conservative media.

Nonetheless, as Raquel evokes, for those engaged in the demonstrations, 2011 remains a 'turning point', even dividing their own private networks:

"I mean, for me 2011 was a turning point, a year of discussion, and of disillusionment with friends as well. (RF: taking the voice of the friend) *"How can you go to the protests"? For the first time seeing a friend in a different way, like when people talked about Pinochet in the 1980s. Last year I lived through that. Because Pinochet's time was something from my parents' generation, we didn't live like that, you know. So, I believe that last year was the first time in my life that I had talks with friends and felt a little disillusioned. Although we were completely tolerant, it was hard that people were angry with us because we went to protest. I remember 2011 as something defining, a year that was a turning point." (Raquel, 1986)*

Raquel's reference to the dividing atmosphere of the dictatorship (concerning her parents' generation) was a common 'bridge' to narrate some aspects of the marches in 2011. In particular, the link emerges when narrating the mounting repression against students. Rodrigo for example decided to start protesting after the most

repressive day (4 August 2011). This day was also remembered because of pot-banging by the middle-class sectors. As I have previously discussed (Chapter Four), pot-banging was a common collective repertoire of protest in Chile against the dictatorship from 1983 onwards (initially, pot-banging was a right-wing repertoire, as it is in today's Argentina). The mounting repression and the pot-banging created a 'generational bridge' to older protest repertories. For many respondents, the experience of being afraid in the streets implied a recovery of their parents or relatives' stories about the dictatorship.

This 'generational bridge' can be strengthened further. The linkage emerged through the framing of their demands against 'Pinochet's education'. The student movement defies the classical beginning of the Chilean canonical narrative of the democratic transition. That is, the student narrative rejects the plebiscite of 1989 as an absolute before and after. By claiming that all aspects of the education system (and other public services such as health and the security system) have followed guidelines from the dictatorship, this clean break was put into doubt. For sure, this argument was already put forward by the radical left in the nineties, but it was never taken seriously until 2011. By 'breaking the beginning', the student narrative linked the dictatorship with democratic governments and, simultaneously, the tragedy of the dictatorship with their own present society (something resisted by older generations).

Furthermore, over the cycle of protests, a revival of the past was visible at the aesthetic level. Songs, melodies and catchwords evoked the atmosphere of the end of the sixties left-wing protests.[104] The signposts reproduced the form of the letters of former protests (here, the key role played by muralists such as the 'Brigada Ramona Parra" or the 'Brigada Chacón" needs to be mentioned). What is more, a new generation of young musicians (e.g. Manuel García, Chinoy) who supported the student movement recovered the tonality of previous decades (new folk songs).[105] In

[104] It is also crucial that a deeper reflection on the intergenerational transmission of difficult pasts subtly took place in 2011–2012 via theatre plays. See, among others, *'Gladys'* (2011; Eliza Zulueta), *'El año en que nací'* (2012; Lola Arias) and *'Oratorio de la lluvia negra'* (2012; Juan Radrigán).

[105] The role of musicians is not restricted to the 'recovery of tonality'. Different artists (through different genres) supported the protests and, likely, enhanced the circulation of a 'movement narrative' in young networks (e.g. Anita Tijoux, Javiera Parra, Juana Fe, Ases Falsos). Even romantic pop groups (e.g. Los Vasquez) promoted the students' 'point of the story'. I am grateful to the Chilean sociologist Felipe Ruz for pointing me to this linkage between musical bands and protests.

2010, a group of these young artists musicalised President Salvador Allende's last speech (*Allende Hoy*). In contrast to previous student protesters in which the creation of cultural distance was achieved through musical traditions such as hip-hop or punk (S. Donoso: 2013b: 9), the recovery of 2011 seems to echo what Boym has called 'a reflective nostalgia' (Boym 2001), enabling building a generational bridge.

Svetlana Boym distinguished reflective from restorative nostalgia in the following terms, "the past for the restorative nostalgic is a value for the present (…) the past is not supposed to reveal any signs of decay, it has to be freshly painted in its 'original image' and remains eternally young. (…) re-flection suggests new flexibility, not the reestablishment of stasis. The focus here is not is not on recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth but on the mediation on history and passage of time" (2001: 49). For the student movement, the recovery is not the truth of the canonical generation of the sixties which carried out the democratic transition and governed the last period (the false heroes), it is rather the impulse to recover a mythical past of public education and to finish with 'the profit' as a utopian (romantic) stance.

Boym also claims that "restorative nostalgia takes itself dead seriously. Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand can be ironic and humorous" (idem). As a case in point, a group of students unfolded a giant signpost with the faces of the ex-presidents Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet in front of the main building of the University of Chile, asking: where are they? (Image 12, next page). The question and the faces are exactly those posed by victims' relatives when they conducted protests demanding information about their families' whereabouts (in Chile and Argentina). The silence of both presidents during the protests contrasts with the intense discussion in public in those days. The satire contained in this signpost might stand for either the sort of 'narrative inversion' which takes place in carnivals (the classical reference is Bakhtin (1984 [1965]: 11) who views carnival as having a peculiar logic of "turnabouts', of "numerous parodies and travesties") or also a sort of distance from and indifference to victim's destiny.

Image 12
Where are they?

Source: http://diario.latercera.com/2011/10/01/01/contenido/reportajes/25-85349-9-jovenes-de-la-fech-buscan-a-bachelet-y-a-lagos-por-silencio-en-crisis.shtml

I completed my interviews by the end of January, 2013. In September 2013, the fortieth anniversary of the coup d'état was commemorated. This event is beyond my temporal frame and marks possible a field for future research. Nonetheless, the ritual of mourning and the public attention were even greater than in 2003. What I would strongly (though preliminarily) suggest is that, without the student movement's magnitude, this kind of commemoration would not be possible. The commemoration was a final stage of subtle narrative changes in which the demise of the canonical narrative was evident; and a new romantic story and, correspondingly, recovery, emerged.[106]

[106] The breaking of the canonical narrative's beginning (the plebiscite as an absolute before and after) was a matter of debate between radical left and centre-left students before the commemoration of the coup d'état. Eventually, they made a declaration and arranged an advertising spot for a student mobilization on 5 September (C. Jara 2014: 19). On this point, although they used the same visual narrative sequence as the canonical generation (the coup d'état, dictatorship, plebiscite and democracy), 'the point of the story' changes remarkably by using the same *music* in the spot, but ending (and accelerating the music rhythm) with the generational and romantic evaluative clause: 'Chile awoke, never again' (the catchphrase 'never again' refers to the classical script against the dictatorship, another form of recovery). See the spot at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRl8lhd0lMk&feature=youtu.be.

In spite of the intensity and national impact of the mobilizations, the education system remained largely market-oriented. Even though the financial system was withdrawn as a direct source of credit, many schools and universities are still regulated according to market assumptions. Consequently, multiple protests have persisted with similar demands until today. Yet, 2011 was narrated as the defining one. Later, in 2013, four leaders of university federations were elected as congressmen. What is more, in her new government, Michelle Bachelet's aims to conduct tax reform and a major reform of education – attempting to create a system of free and public education – both remain political targets of the student movement. The political weight of the social movement is unquestionable, though its narrative construction may still be in progress.

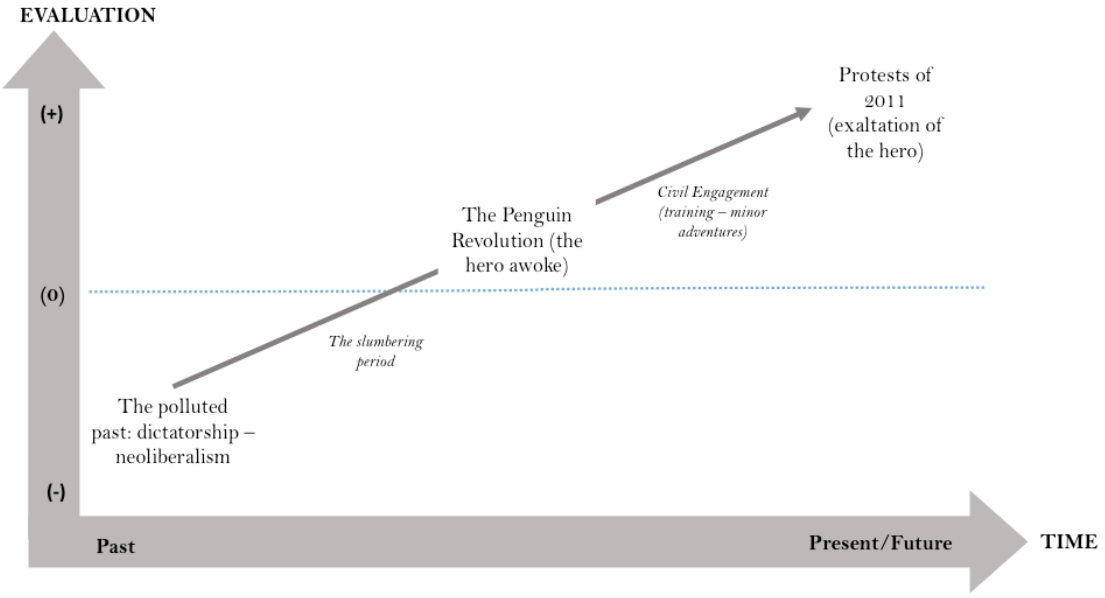
6.6 The romantic plot

Finally, I would like to illustrate some central characteristics of the romantic plot as the most fitting mode of emplotment of these generational stories. According to Ronald Jacobs and Philipp Smith, two sociological traits belong to romantic plots: on the one hand, they are "founded upon a 'theme of ascent' in which individuals and collectivities move toward a more perfect state" (1997:67), and on the other hand, "they assume the existence of powerful and overarching collective identities" (1997: 68). In other terms, romance plots are about "successful quests" (Fryre 1957: 187) as well as the presentation of an idealized world whereby "heroes are brave, heroines beautiful, villains villainous and the frustrations, ambiguities, and embarrassments of ordinary life are made little of" (Fryre 1957: 151).

The occurrence of two cycles of protests in 2006 and 2011 bestowed a primary sense on this romantic quest (the emergence of the conflict and the death struggle). The generational story is enmeshed in the student movement as a romantic progression (Figure 7, next page). Between both cycles of protests, the active process of civil engagement – although a typical feature of youth in terms of the modern institutionalized life course – is reframed as part of a 'story of becoming' (Bearman and Stovel 2000). Additionally, when contrasting 2006 and 2011, it was clear that the characters grew: the subject became powerful and the main opponents were represented as more evil. The hero subject gained consciousness of his mission, and

the villain was more clearly entangled in polluted networks (dictatorship, Neoliberalism, profit). Eventually, the societal model (private vs public) was at stake. As a structural feature, the romantic plot takes the form of a utopian stance, the plot "can unite persons in the pursuit of this utopian future" (Smith and Jacobs 1997: 68).

Figure 7
Romantic Plot-line



All the protests and marches of 2011 were reported as a defining time, a conflict between reasonable students and evil villains or false helpers. Interestingly, when my respondents claimed that the protesters were non-violent (demarcating themselves from hooded protesters who emerged at the end of the marches), it closely resembles the American code of civil society (Alexander and Smith 1993), whereby "actors are valued and trusted only if they are autonomous rational subjects. Those who lack reason or are emotive are devalued and excluded from full participation in society" (Smith 2005:15). Not surprisingly, according to Jacobs and Smith, "[r]omance is at the core of the discourse of civil society" (1997: 68).

Finally, it is noteworthy what Norbert Frye refers to as the 'analogy of innocence' of the romantic hero (1957: 151). In terms of cultural sociology, the hero is symbolically 'unpolluted'. If we return to the sentence 'without fear any longer' as well as the temporal boundary of being born after the dictatorship ('we don't have personal memories of the dictatorship'), both affirmations affirm an innocent role.

Whereas their generation site is pure, the past is polluted, not only by the 17 years of dictatorship, but also by the state of being afraid and, as a result, being unable to discuss the consequences of the dictatorship. The past is then recovered as a mythical struggle (protests against dictatorship) or a golden age (the age of public education). The romantic mode of emplotment brings forward an idea of mythical recovery rather than a collective process of mourning as in a tragic emplotment.

Chapter 7

Towards a narrative understanding of generational building

Over the last four chapters I have looked at sequences of events being narrated by people coming of age in the 1980s and 2000s. By examining a large set of life stories from 'ordinary' citizens of Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile, I have shown how people endow remote and recent events with meaning. These meanings are, however, not arbitrary but based on structures – and cultural sociology's precise aim is to understand such structures of meaning (Alexander 2003).

This last chapter seeks to explain these structures of meaning by drawing on formal elements detected in the above analysis. Hence I provide the basis for a comprehensive narrative understanding of generational building. I have already elaborated on two central aspects of generational building: synchronic and diachronic dimensions (see 1.1 and 1.2). The first aspect relates to the intersection between biographical experiences and macro events. People born in similar years experience some events together, leaving collective repertoires of evaluation embedded in shared generational stories. Networks of peers circulate those stories, and they might be divided into generational units when interpreting those circumstances. The diachronic dimension refers to the transmission of stories from older generational sites through different memory supports (icons, songs, rituals and so on). When attempting to link both dimensions, a particular *'puzzle of temporality'* emerges: how can 'present/future visions' be linked with the 'burden of the past'?

In the following, I return to the pieces of this *'puzzle of temporality'* in order to show how it is resolved by looking through the lens of a narrative approach. I have argued that narratives are a key linking mechanism between synchronic (connecting structures) and diachronic dimensions (intergenerational memories). I understand narratives as temporal sequences which entail repertoires of evaluation and foster symbolic boundaries. Repertoires of moral evaluation endow meaning attribution on times, spaces and social groups. Modes of plotting events pattern temporal sequences, aligning 'spaces of experiences' with 'horizons of expectation'. In particular, modes of emplotment explain when, how and why life stories might (not) be entangled with generational repertoires of evaluation.

Against this background, the first section (7.1) turns to the synchronic dimension in order to examine how and when people connect their biographies with macro events. At this level, I review the thesis of formative or critical years (the most impressionable years of youth) by analysing the role of *emotional bond*s left by collective experiences (7.1.1). This aspect is complemented by a search for *narrative coherence* (7.1.2). After that, I look at the function occupied by *narratives templates* for recounting childhood (7.1.3). Ultimately, I demonstrate that upper class and lower classes in both countries concentrate on private life courses and biographical memories, thereby blocking – narratively - the intersection between life courses and collective events.

Along the diachronic dimension (7.2), I reveal how people locate themselves (or are located) historically vis-à-vis (non-biographical) historical pasts. I will concentrate here on the construction of temporal boundaries (before/after) and on how certain triumphant or difficult pasts are polluted or recovered through generations. I will first explain (7.2.1) some aspects of family memories when looking at mechanisms of loyalty and communicative silence. After that (7.2.2), I recount how pasts are fostered or hampered by other communicative supports (peer conversations, school, mass media). Next, I turn to 'economic events' and how they are narrated as turning points in the Argentinean and Chilean contexts (7.2.3). Finally, at the level of state narratives, I show to what extent a 'transnational tragic narrative' concerning crimes against human rights during dictatorship is nationally differentiated by the canonizing (Argentina) and weakening (Chile) of collective memories (7.2.4).

In the last section (7.3), I compare the fives modes of emplotment analysed at the end of each chapter. These modes of emplotment create a link between meanings attributed to biographical experiences with contexts of past narrativization. Subsequently, *a nostalgic plot* (7.3.1) involves an experience of insecurity when reacting against a new canonical narrative. A *comical plot* (7.3.2) integrates experiences of youth with promises of change conveyed by the same canonical narrative. A *consoling plot* (7.3.3) emerges from the promise/disillusionment of democracy and the lack of collective illusion. A *cyclical plot* (7.3.4) appears among those growing up in a decade of public memorialisation, and the emergence of old divisions. Finally, a *romantic plot* (7.3.5) encloses a heroic saga of student protests and makes present the weakening of a canonical narrative.

7.1 Explaining intersections at the synchronic level

People's life courses are intersected by defining collective events, e.g. political turning points, economic turmoil, violent conflicts, technological and cultural revolutions or social mobilizations at different ages. Different authors maintain that events occurring during youth, or from late childhood to early adulthood, leave the strongest and most perdurable impressions. This is the thesis of the 'reminiscence bump' or 'formative' or 'critical' years' (for different formulations of the same thesis see, among others, Conway 1997, Schuman and Scott 1989, Schuman and Corning 2014).

Mannheim based his essay on generations under the idea of the 'most impressionable years', following Dilthey's understanding. Life course approaches provide for more accurate temporal localization. Mannheim's thesis of the formative years focuses on the period in which modern institutionalized life courses are embedded in horizontal networks of peers (i.e. the time of educative institutions). Within communicative networks outside the family space there emerges a milieu for generational remembering.

New readings of 'the problem of generations' look at the "intersection of biographical and historical time" (Alwin and McCammon 2007: 234). Coevals might be cognitively and narratively affected in dissimilar ways by historical events. Memory studies have recurrently pointed to both the cognitive and social character of recollecting (Bietti 2010, 2012). At the cognitive level, people begin by developing a major awareness of what takes place in the outer world from late childhood. Such consciousness depends on whether individuals "are capable of presenting their experiences in the form of sequential stories (…) and this capacity is only acquired gradually over time through social practice: telling about the past or about memories of the past in presence of others" (Welzer and Markowitsch 2005:71).

Is such a generational thesis observable in the four generational sites analysed above? Were the selections of events informed by those critical years? What role(s) does childhood and adult memories play in that case? Let me summarize my findings in four points by showing how my respondents connected life courses and collective events through their stories.

7.1.1 The emotional bond

Seen either through the iterative frequency of 'collective event' mentions or the emotional narrative voice adopted, the intersection between life story and collective experiences is undoubtedly marked by the thesis of formative years. All over the four generational sites, individuals endowed meaning to certain public events which occurred during late childhood and early adulthood (9-25 years old). Still, the thesis is unspecific and needs to be differentiated.

At the most basic level, it is possible to distinguish events narrated as passive observers or active performers (for the narrative distinction between passive and active characters, see Bremond 1980). Let me first describe those events and the meaning attributed to them from a passive perspective.

The principal events narrated by the adult cohort as passive observers were the Malvinas/Falklands War in 1982 in Argentina (3.4) and the protests during dictatorship in 1983-1984 in Chile (4.2). The younger Argentine cohort tends to mention the crisis of 2001 (5.3) and, in both countries, to a lesser extent, the attacks of 9/11 (6.2).[1] The Malvinas/ Falklands War and the protests against dictatorship in Chile were remembered as critical and defining situations by the adult cohort. It was the first time they saw people demonstrating in the streets, a public fervour they had never experienced before. These events were narrated as turning points since they provoked a first breaking of the public silence about the earlier years of dictatorship. The crisis of 2001 for young Argentines follows a similar sequence: only after the economic turmoil did people realize that they had lived through a 'fake' decade of impoverishment and evil Neoliberalism. This sense of breaking creates an image of child unawareness.

In all these cases, people were at the end of their childhood or in early adolescence. There is thus no doubt that their passive stance is related to age. They narrated themselves as too young to be 'there' – *outside* – thereby *not really* experiencing and understanding what was occurring. Nevertheless, all these occasions were represented as significant turning points. Indeed, these events were narrated as

[1] 9/11 was often mentioned by young interviewees. However, the event lacks a link to their everyday lives and future events. Moreover, the cultural code of global risk and insecurity associated with 9/11 (Edmunds and Turner 2005) does not emerge. Rather, a conspiracy theory dominates as an evaluative clause.

breaking childhood routines, though barely understood in those moments. These events interrupted a period of childhood unawareness, making visible an outer world. These are the first moments of their life stories in which they locate themselves historically. It is thus something 'shareable' and remembered among coevals.

Mass media (radio and television) are the main memory frame mentioned for remembering these events. Interviewees remembered themselves following mostly reportage and news. This situation facilitates, in their life stories, the drawing of a clear generational boundary. 'Older brothers' actively either participating in the protests of 1983 or experiencing the crisis of 2001 in the streets would recount another story. For them, the active role taken by coevals 3-5 years older signalled a different generational belonging. In all these cases, the respondents claim: 'I was not there, they were.' Thus while the relevance of those events is not doubted, the narrative voice and the capacity to use those circumstances as identity markers are different. So far, quantitative surveys on generational memories have not grasped this difference (e.g. Carvacho et al. 2013; Guichard and Henríquez 2011; Oddone and Lynch, 2008).

Furthermore, these events illustrate that the first bedrock for generational building is not generational 'consciousness' or some sort of 'habitus' (Edmunds and Turner 2002a; 2002b; Eyerman and Turner 1999). Rather, the first element is an emotional bond: *disillusionment* with the war in Argentina, the *fear* during the years of protests in Chile, the feeling of *uncertainty* in 2001 in Argentina, or even a sense of *perplexity* and global connectedness when watching the second tower coming down in New York. All these events were narrated by my interviewees in an emotionally laden way. This is why all interviewees insisted on clarifying that they had not understood what was going on at that moment; and yet, it was crucial for them to narrate and remember those circumstances. I suggest that these events remain primarily as a "structure of feeling". Even though Raymond Williams' concept of 'structure of feeling' operates at a macro level, standing for "the culture of a period" (2001 [1961]: 68), Williams understood the concept as also occurring at a generational level. He asserts: "One generation may train its successor, with reasonable success, in the social character or the general cultural pattern, but the new generation will have its own structure of feeling, which will not appear to have come 'from' anywhere" (ibid).

This emotional component becomes stronger when the event can be narrated in terms of one's own performance, as an active character in the proceedings. This is the most visible synchronic mechanism for linking life stories and public events in life stories: *I* was there; *we* were there *outside*. In this case, the events take on a more participative quality and the narrator assumes an active position in the story. I have described these events when examining youth politicization in Argentina after the recovery of democracy (3,5) and the plebiscite of 1988 in Chile (4.6), as well as the recent political polarization in Argentina (5.5. and 5.6) and the Chilean cycle of student protests of 2006 and 2011 (6.4 and 6.5). No doubt, the role of either being an active participant in social movements or a witness to political movements promotes images of generational belonging (see, in particular, Eyerman 2001, 2002).[2]

Both awareness and corporal presence in these circumstances differ from later-childhood experiences. Here, they bestow a major sense of authenticity on these experiences through a different narrative voice. In particular, the body acts not only as a reservoir of emotions, but also testifies to their presence and the role taken. Giesen has stressed this corporal dimension of generational memory as a resource of authenticity. He ascertains: "[T]he collective self-consciousness of a generation depends less on the actual uniqueness of an event than on its believability and authenticity (…) A first and basic mode of corporeal experience is provided by presence at the site of the event – one's own eyes have seen the extraordinary event, the ears have heard it, the skin has felt it" (Giesen 2004a: 34). In addition, what I have coined the 'generational argument' (I was there, you were not; therefore you cannot understand) is partly based on this image of 'being there'.

A large proportion of the stories circulating within the four generational sites belong to these performative circumstances. They took place during their youth, in the middle of their formative or critical years. These events match a life course period of civil participation when many young people enrol in multiple organizations (cultural, religious, solidarity, student, political, sport groups). Even if they do not

[2] As Anna von der Goltz ascertains (2011:15), "in the case of the '68ers', a feeling of collective belonging based on the performative nature of the protest and the need to endow the events with meaning while they were happening, stood at the beginning of a long-term process of generation building, nurtured further by the commemoration of common experiences over time".

directly take part in events, they experience a world beyond home and amongst horizontal networks of peers embedded in public engagement.

The awareness of being 'there' connects their life stories to a larger 'history'. This is the micro foundation of generational memories in which some selected events offer a sense of 'generationality' (Reulecke 2003: viii): people locate themselves (or are located) in their historical time. It might be noted, nonetheless, that performances do not automatically suppose some form of 'we' identification, as Heinz Bude (1997) maintains. The young cohorts in Buenos Aires and Santiago, both experiencing increasing politicization, differ with respect to their emplotment: while some modes of plotting promote an intergenerational 'we', beyond age difference (e.g. a cyclical plot, 5.7), others nourish the idea of a strong 'we', different from older groups (e.g. a romantic plot, 6.6.).

7.1.2 The search for coherence

Those events, selected from either the perspective of passive observer or active participant, hold not only high relevance for respondents but also constitute a dynamic process of meaning attribution. The significance of war, protests and crises evolves over time as every memory does. As Gabriele Rosenthal has pointed out, "für eine Generation konstitutiv sind nicht nur gemeinsame prägende Erlebnisse oder Lebensphasen zum Zeitpunkt des Erlebens, sondern auch deren *Reinterpretationen*, die jederzeit im Lebenslauf erfolgen bzw. durch bestimmte spätere Ereignisse und Phasen ausgelöst werden können" (2000: 65). Similarly, Michael Corsten coined the concept of 'biographical revisions' to refer to "the way in which people, looking back, interpret and reinterpret their experiences of the sequence of their life phases" (2003).

However, it is difficult to distinguish between previous repertoires of evaluation and present meaning attributions. For example, a romantic plot about the recovery of democracy and political activism in Argentina during the eighties was already reconverted and recounted from an ironical stance (3.5). In Chapter Three I noted, that after the amnesty and general lack of political activism during the nineties in Argentina, great public heroes in those times became blocking characters or false helpers in present narrations. Similarly, the triumphal narration of the plebiscite of

1988 in Chile – fostered by the left-centre tradition which was proud of defeating the dictatorship via a legal process – gradually transformed into feelings of detachment and disillusionment (4.7). A sense of nostalgia and irony replaced public fervour. In both cases, older interviewees reported an emotional and triumphant narration; yet, simultaneously, they continued by offering a more negative evaluation to narrate subsequent circumstances. With the experience of new events, people again aim to establish narrative coherence by changing previous meanings concerning what was previously recounted as 'defining experiences' of their formative years.

The trope of street insecurity is a case in point regarding the search for narrative coherence. For those experiencing parenthood in the context of an increasing focus on street insecurity (from the nineties onwards), childhood under the dictatorship is converted into a place of safety (see 3.7 and 4.8, above). This might be a common right-wing script in the Southern Cone. Tellingly, however, when the process of coming to terms with the dictatorship had sealed the past as a national tragedy, dictatorship could not be regarded as a time of order and safety (Kessler 2009: 102). As a result, in order to bestow coherence on the narrative sequence, a period of safety and peace is somewhat located in a mythical, golden age which preceded the dictatorship.

The search for coherence does not only affect older cohorts. Young people too connect events in order to create narrative coherence. For example, in Santiago de Chile, the protests and sit-ins of 2006 are narrated under the evaluative codes which emerged during street demonstrations in 2011 (see 6.4). In Buenos Aires, political mobilisation was temporally framed by Nestor Kirchner coming into office in 2003 as the beginning of public engagement (5.5) and his death in 2010 (5.6) This process of 'casing' (Bearman et al. 1999) beginnings and ends – in the case of young Argentine people, it promotes a new evaluation of their childhood (the 'evil' nineties, 5.2) as well as great expectations (or terrible prognoses depending on the social group in question, 5.7). The underlying idea is that a search for coherence might occur when new events modify social meanings. Thus, future events may alter what today is regarded as defining and heroic (for example, student protests in Chile), or even what is considered polluted and evil (e.g. the nineties in Argentina).

7.1.3 Memories of childhood and narrative templates

After looking at the role played by memories of critical years for youth in generational building and the effect of narrative coherence on generational stories, I now turn to childhood memories. The two periods of childhood recounted by my respondents were very different: a gruesome dictatorship during the seventies (see section 3.2. in Buenos Aires and 4.2 in Santiago) and a period of democracy and market consumption during the nineties (also, 5.2. in Argentina and 6.2 in Chile).

The majority of my respondents had dim and blurry recollections about collective events in their childhood. These biographical recollections are particularly based on family accounts via anecdotes situated in social spaces such as home and primary school. Against this background, *narrative templates* (Wertsch 2002, 2008) facilitate and bestow coherence on unclear blurry elements.

For the older cohort, the past contains multiple, blurry anecdotes (soldiers in the street, aeroplanes, floating bodies, clandestine arrests), many of them stem from their relatives' rather than their own biographical experiences (as was the case when recounting youth experiences). In addition, different processes of coming to terms with dictatorial regimes result in their own narrations. I will return to this point later when discussing canonical narratives. Here, my interest lies in sketching out initial differences between the two national contexts, given some of the broad templates employed.

In Buenos Aires, stories about the dictatorship were based on robust templates structuring narrative sequences (a history of violence; see 3.2). This sequence ends with the strong figure (narratively speaking) of military perpetrators and the sacred character of women and children as central victims (3.5). Even though there are multiple semantic differences (political persecution vs genocide) and contradictory evaluations (good soldiers haunting male guerrilla fighters vs horrible perpetrators kidnapping children), there is a shared judgement which defines this past as heinous and in need of being commemorated (as an effect of civil rights struggles and governments' politics of memory, see 5.5). In Santiago de Chile, there is no clear template which structures memories of a difficult past. Moral templates ('Cain versus Abel') or moral justifications ('egoism' and 'a thirst for power') replace explanatory or historical sequences (4.1). Thus, it is difficult for people to tell coherent stories

about their childhood when weak and divided historical explanations predominate concerning the reasons for violent periods.

The second period of childhood investigated in this thesis was the 'nineties. Since the economic crisis of 2001 there has been a common narrative template circulating in Argentina. That is to say, after the economic collapse and liminal stage of uncertainty, the nineties were increasingly narrated as a time of evil neoliberalism, repression and political apathy. The template circulates amongst 'winners' and 'losers' of that decade, marked by a process of market liberalization, high consumerism and, for a good section of Argentine society, decreasing welfare and poverty. I argue that a mechanism of victimization is activated - particularly evident in winners' heirs stories - when all respondents end up describing 'the fake lie' of Argentine society, and attribute blame to particular characters (in particular former president Menem).

In Chile, the nineties appeared to be flat with no relevant collective events. It might be argued that there are 'objectives conditions' of this 'flattening': eventually, compared to previous decades, the nineties were 'boring', 'banal', a time of consumption, neoliberal consolidation and the deactivation of civil society. But even some critical events for older cohorts – Pinochet being detained in London – were barely mentioned. This might be due to age but also to a common narrative template. In young Chileans' life stories, the nineties were narrated under the evaluative clause of 'slumbering period' brought about by technology. This is only justified by a later image of 'awakening' through student protests. In order to enhance the generational value of the student protests, the previous period needs to be narrated as one dominated by individualism and the 'bubble' of private life.

I have no doubt that some diverse events and circumstances of the nineties were not mentioned in either country. One clear example is the attack on AMIA (Asociación de Mutuales Israelitas Argentinas) in 1994. Interestingly, only two people among sixty interviewees mentioned the attack. Both young Jewish Argentine respondents, born in 1990, begin narrating their life stories from this traumatic episode, thereby making the attack a defining event in their life stories. Both respondents not only started recounting the violent circumstances, but also evoked later uninterrupted rituals of mourning in their families and schools (even though they were not directly affected). By remembering the traumatic situation within the Argentine Jewish

community, at stake was both a sense of belonging and an urge to create identity boundaries after the attacks (there was also an attack on the embassy in 1992, but nobody mentioned it). In this sense, for some cases of collective trauma – which are crucially remembered within family and community – memories of childhood became defining, in spite of their blurred recollections.

Needless to say, children and second/third generations of the relatives of victims of state terrorism in Chile and Argentina might have developed a similar sense of belonging through diverse forms of memorizing their missing relatives, or by means of their struggle against oblivion and silence. The extensive literature on the transgenerational transmission of trauma – psychoanalytically oriented – has guided this line of research.[3] However, this sense of belonging is not evident in cases of the broad 'public' in either country. Their trauma is scarcely appropriated as a collective loss since contentious and dividing memories circulating around the interpretations of the past (moreover, Chile and Argentina differ in their 'grades' of appropriation, see below) as well as the families of victims enclose a great part of the tragedy (the majority of respondents do not feel qualified to speak about the past since they do not have victims in their families). While it is possible to speak about a '(trans)national tragic past' as a common evaluation (in spite of multiple communicative silences and dividing memories), it would be misleading to refer to a sense of transgenerational 'transferred' trauma for a broader group.

7.1.4 Blocking the intersection of life courses and collective events: class memories

By connecting biographical sequences and public events through life stories, processes of selection and meaning attribution intersect which each other. This might always be the case with processes of narrativity (Rosenthal 1993) and

[3] Ute Karstein summarizes this scholar's standpoint as follows: "Statt zur Markierung von generationellen Differenzen kann es demnach ebenso gut zu "transgenerationellen Prozessen" der Weitergabe historischer Erfahrung und damit verknüpfter Gefühlslagen (Schuld, Trauma) kommen, wie insbesondere die psychoanalytisch orientierte Generationsforschung belegt hat" (2009: 57). Some authors have, however, critically considered such a possibility. As Weigel states, "a genealogy of memory in the sense of a clear and (re-)countable succession of symptom manifestation and lasting effects in later generations can only be made out among survivors or victims" (2002: 271).

collective remembering (Schwartz et al. 1996). Nevertheless, the very fact of recalling shared experiences by the entire sample of respondents was not always the case. Beyond particular biographical particularities, two groups of class memories tend to block the intersection between life courses and collective events across the four generational sites: lower-class and upper-class memories. This is an interesting result since generational or memory studies generally adopt a top-down perspective (i.e. a focus on the construction of memories by cultural and intellectual elites) while paying little attention to structural (socio-economic) differences within the broader generational site. Evidently the reasons behind such a process of blocking differ.

In the case of lower-class respondents, they concentrated much more on biographical and life-course circumstances, as stories circulating about their social situation encapsulate their biographies both emotionally and bodily. These situations refer not only to social conditions of exclusion, but also, and predominantly, to reports of violence – rapes, beatings and brutal murders – described as part and parcel of old and present ordinary lives. The violence emerges in family relationship and street (neighbourhood) contexts. In the former case, narratives of violence take the form of gendered memories, i.e. male beatings and women tolerating harsh conditions for years.[4] In the context of 'the street', narratives of violence are linked to the emergence of drugs rings and, consequently, a mounting feeling of insecurity. When the narrator here has suffered some traumatic violent circumstance, collective events reported as turning points by the majority faded away as part of an irrelevant outer world. In other terms, an entire childhood or youth dominated by violent fathers or brothers matters more than the macro process (for instance, dictatorship/ democracy or youth politicization).

There were cases of linking state violence and life courses in lower-class interviewees' stories. In particular, older Chilean respondents living in emblematic shantytowns keenly remembered house raids and police repression under dictatorship (4.3). Still, this memory depends on particular local territories in which

[4] By looking at Gómez-Barris' insight regarding the crucial role of women in the Chilean dictatorship, another aspect of generational gendered memories appears: "[D]uring the dictatorship, especially during the 1980s, women's agency and visibility were extremely high in the public sphere through human rights movements, sex education and liberation, and 'feminine' focused organizations, such as soup kitchens and communal centers" (2009: 120). Similar cases are even more evident in Argentina (e.g. human rights groups of victims' grandmothers and mothers). No doubt both contemporary presidents (Michelle Bachelet and Cristina Fernandez) stem from that generational site. Heroic females, nevertheless, seem to decrease as key characters in younger generational sites.

police repression is remembered as violent trauma. Indeed, in other shantytowns, these processes were not visible as there was no form of collective remembering.

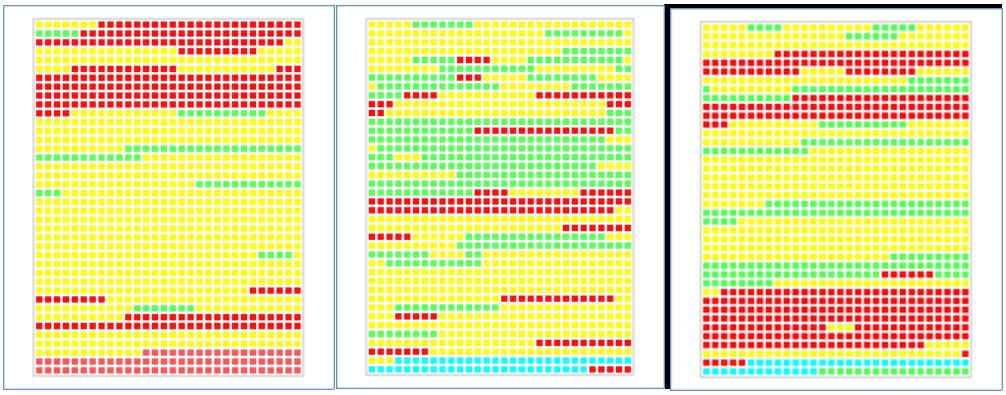
Upper-class (as well as upper-middle class) respondents spent great parts of their interviews recalling biographical, private experiences. My eliciting question (2.2, above) allowed the mentioning of private or collective events, as well as the intersection of both. The focus on their private stories (e.g. travelling, friendship, and family anecdotes) was noticeable. When mentioning collective events as time-mark references – and I particularly asked about what happens then – they preferred to individualize them. For instance, on mentioning the Malvinas/ Falklands War or the crisis of 2001, they concentrate on the intersection between macro events and holidays or trips. I suggest that upper-class memories concentrate on private stories as a form of 'social closure' (Parkin 1979).[5] Closure is fostered within family conversations when presenting political and socio-economic events as external disruptions. By trying to reinforce a privileged inner boundary, the outer world may not disturb the inner circle.

Are generational memories thus only a matter for the middle classes? Not necessarily. There are some cross-cutting experiences, e.g. the hyperinflation of 1989 in Argentina or the student movement in 2011 (although there are always conflicts over representation). In addition, some upper-class respondents engaging in civil society organizations adopt different (external) narratives or, in some cases, break through inner-family boundaries. Left-wing family traditions in lower- or upper-class contexts also stimulate some public orientation. Nevertheless, there is a general tendency toward intersecting life courses and public experiences amongst middle-class respondents (Fig. 8, next page). This does not imply that the middle classes are homogenous groups (see the increasing differentiation of the Chilean and Argentinean middle-classes in Franco et al. 2007).

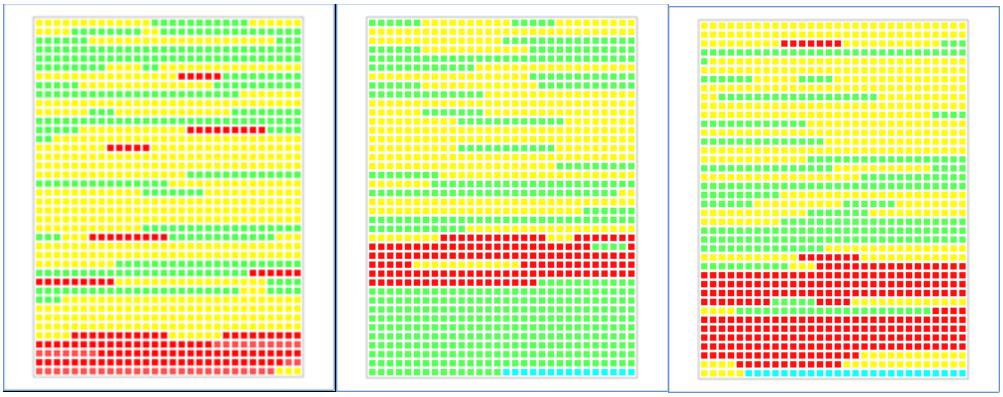
[5] See also Karstein's model of "Familienkommunikation als Repräsentation familialer Geschlossenheit" (2009: 59-60).

Figure 8
Event-codification according to three social segments

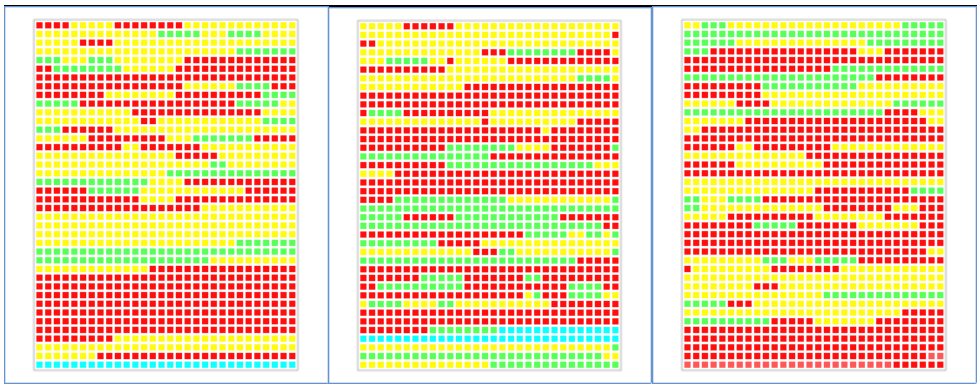
Each figure portrays the codification of events for a single interviewee. Red (dark) symbolizes collective events. Yellow and green (bright colours) represent life-course (e.g. school enrolment) or biographical events (e.g. diseases; see codification in 2.1.1). The augmentation of dark colours at the end of all interviews is because of my own questions (after the final statement of every life story). A salient difference is found in the numbers of red spots in middle-class interviews, in which collective events more often match biographical sequences. These examples come from the Buenos Aires sample, yet they are similar for the Chilean interviews.



(Buenos Aires, Upper Class: Guillermo [1972] Teresa [1987], Flor [1972])



(Buenos Aires, Lower Class: Fabiana [1994] Hugo [1989], María [1972])



(Buenos Aires, Middle Class: Luisa [1986] Vicente [1988], Marcelo[1968])

7.2 Explaining projects of boundary control at the diachronic level

After examining key aspects of how life courses are connected (or disconnected) to collective events via storytelling, I turn to the role of 'older' stories at the diachronic level of generational building. The aim is to show the extent to which memories of historical pasts inform the content and form of generational narratives.

The impact of the past on the present might be framed differently according to the theoretical perspective. For instance, given the contemporary concern with difficult pasts, the literature on generational relationships has primarily focused on 'bitter' heritages or 'traumatic' legacies. Hirsch's reflection of postmemory as the 'transgenerational transmission of trauma' (2008) predominates, at least in research on state-terrorism memories in the Southern Cone. Here, the focus is on analysing how collective traumas are handed down from generation to generation through emotions, family albums, sites of memory and so forth.

Taking a different position I suggest discussing the phenomenon of generational relationships via the idea of 'boundary control'. I have already noted (1.4) that one of the most fundamental characteristics of narrativity is the generation of symbolic boundaries. That is, in-out borders (us/them) are defined within stories (internal characters are excluded or represented as external 'others') or when people circulate stories as constituencies of their group story, thereby preventing 'others' from appropriating such stories.

The idea of control points to 'boundary work' (Lamont 2000), that is, work through social groups attempts to delimit *us* from *them*. Following Harrison White, Klaus Eder suggests that "networks of communications generate identities as a project of control of their boundaries" (Eder 2009: 435; Harrison White 2008). Drawing on this formulation, I would like to outline some mechanisms for controlling 'temporal' boundaries. I have argued that the evaluative codes embedded in narratives might generate moral, social and temporal boundaries. Indeed, stories about the past (as a realm of older generations) draw not only identity boundaries ('our time'/ 'their time'), but also stimulate the relevance of certain periods (canonization) or block historical events. This might take place at the level of family, school or media, amongst other memory settings.

In post-dictatorial contexts, projects of temporal boundary control are embedded in political struggles over the meaning attributed to right-wing dictatorships. Macarena Gómez-Barris has rightly defined this field of meaning construction as 'memory symbolic', "how the national public sphere in transition is mediated and constructed by state-led initiatives (truth commissions, reports, commemorative events, [...]) and alternative forms of memory that reconstruct the past (gathering of witnesses, public funerals [...]) with presentist interests in mind" (2009: 5). Drawing on this formulation, I will highlight the canonization/ demise of narrative templates within the field of Southern Cone public memory.

7.2.1 Family memory: loyalty and communicative silence

Family communication is a central mechanism for controlling temporal boundaries. As a primary source of personal identity, families transmit certain stories, omit others and provide for cultural legacies. As a storehouse of stories, family memories linger unquestionably for years, even for decades. To neglect or openly reject family memories is often improbable. In family communication, Walter Fisher's concept of 'narrative fidelity' (1985) is based on *loyalty* rather than "accurate assertions about social reality" (Czarniawska 2004: 10). Similarly, Welzer's et al. (2002) research on German family memories demonstrates the weight of family *loyalty* in spite of school and German national discourses of past wrongdoings. Loyalty works together with a narrative process of the 'heroization' (*Heroisierung*) of (grand)parents' by their descendants.

In Southern Cone upper-class memories, family loyalty coalesces with a mechanism of social closure. In middle-class memories, multiple stories elevate parents to the level of heroes fighting against evil forces. In lower-class contexts, where the male figure is frequently linked to past wrongdoings (violence, abuse, alcoholism), mothers reach some 'sacred' status. Loyalty to mothers' memories is thus central in family memories amongst lower-class respondents.

Methodologically speaking, I cannot distinguish families' stories from individuals' accounts; and neither can I identify narrative modifiers amongst family members. However, it is clear that interviewees often supported their narrations via family

accounts and thereby endowed them with authority: 'my mother remembered', 'my father used to recount' or 'my grandparents experienced that'.

Contradictions between different levels of memory take on the clearest form when a widespread national template (for example, dictatorship as a heinous tragedy) contradicts parents' versions (for instance, dictatorship as a site of security and order). In Buenos Aires, Kirchner's canonical narrative reinforces the sacral character of victims and the horror of the dictatorship, becoming an indisputable historical judgement. The Argentine young people's approach to the past (5.5) incorporated such an appraisal, thereby openly discussing parents' stories.

Another form of family memory is communicative silence. This mechanism not only blocks memories of older events, but also attempts to neglect the emergence of new ones. This is why the generational argument ('I was there, you were not') produces silence ('you cannot understand'). When the past is difficult to recount – due to fear of conflict or collective evaluative clauses ('avoiding resentment') – silence preserves the past by blocking the conversation. Communicative silence characterised Chilean family and political communication for many years (see 4.2 and 6.1). Part of the codification of the student movement – 'without fear any longer' – and other assessments of family communication ('my parents have too much respect for social order') emerge from positive self-ascription to their communicative practices. Digital media and the Internet (Wikipedia, Facebook) would break communicative silences at different levels (family, school, university etc.).

Nonetheless, open criticism of family memories or forms of family acrimony seldom occurred in post-dictatorial contexts. Wrongdoings and perpetrators belong to the political sphere, elites or military forces, but hardly ever to the family circle.

7.2.2 School-Media Supports: reinforcement and breaking

The relevance of family communication for the transmission of difficult pasts has been one of the most important arguments in criticism of the thesis of formative years (e.g. Rosenthal 2000). Generations might be affected by older historical events, or childhood memories of critical events, through family communication. As a result, the 'diachronic' dimension will be more important than biographical memories at the 'synchronic' level. Now, even if family memories are crucial for the construction of

temporal boundaries and the repertoire of moral evaluations of past wrongdoings, it is equally true that emphasis on family communication has narrowed down the effect of peer communication in current research on generational memories. To focus exclusively on family dialogue might lead to overlooking the binding power of peer networks of communication. These networks evolve through the civil sphere and educative establishments (student councils, cultural organizations, solidarity groups and so on). These new relationships might modify story patterns.

Family, school and peer-group communications are, however, intertwined. Due to the class-structured systems of educations in Argentina and Chile, parents send their children to establishments where family stories might be reinforced. This is particularly the case for upper-class families and private schools. In state or semi-private institutions, government curricula have more impact and consolidate state narrative templates (González 2012, Lorenz 2004, Reyes Jedlicki 2005).

At the macro level, one effect of peer-group communication is unleashed with the rise of a new public narrative. A good example is the discussion fostered by Néstor Kirchner's canonical narrative (5.5). Its symbolic effect was not only spread across family tables, media reports and classrooms, but also echoed by different initiatives of memory through networks of peer groups (e.g. student councils organizing debates with ex-prisoners, cultural organizations watching films or theatre plays). As I have shown, there was a close match between the increase in school initiatives (amongst young groups) and the emergence of a canonical narrative. Whereas for older generational sites in Argentina the memory field was dominated by human rights initiatives (especially during the nineties), the youngest generational site (coming of age in the 2000s) perceived its turning point as Kirchner's political and symbolic agenda.

The Chilean generational site offers a similar pattern, though the turning point is located in the student movement (6.5). This was visible through the circulation of new codes ('awaken'/ 'without fear any longer'/ 'against profit') and the interruption of older canonical narratives. This story group circulates via digital media (e.g. Facebook) or street protests. Additionally, popular music bands and young artists, who strongly supported protests, reproduced these evaluative codes amongst coevals in street protests, cultural initiatives or the mass media.

Latin American scholars have leant towards the reflective and critical character of cultural media as counter-memories for official or dominant narrative templates. The character of crossing boundaries would be seen in literary oeuvres, theatre plays, documental or memorials (Gómez-Barris 2009, Ros 2012, Sosa 2011, 2012, Werth 2010). Nevertheless, the impact of these cultural artefacts at the level of the larger 'public audience' is not really clear. At least in Santiago de Chile, cultural consumption is an upper-class practice. Still, for people living in the province of Buenos Aires it might be the same. What is more, cultural artefacts aiming to remembering right-wing dictatorships are followed exclusively by groups close to victims' relatives or, at least, ideologically aligned.

Nonetheless, there are some relevant national differences. In Argentina, via the mass media, many films, much reportage and many documentaries or serials about state violence are broadcast. In Chile, some of the most critical films have still never been aired. Only in recent years have Chilean TV serials become a new genre dealing with remembering dictatorship (*Los Ochentas*), although ratings decrease as soon as more crude and polemic images are revealed (*Los Archivos del Cardenal*).[6]

There is a widespread assumption that digital memory, and the extensive source of stories offered by the Internet (e.g. Wikipedia), might have modified the field of memory, especially in the case of young cohorts (being 'the techno-sociability generation' in the term of PNUD 2010). For instance, what is neglected by parents, teachers or national authorities might be opened up and freed on the 'Web'. Now, when comparing the weight of family memories, class memories or political narratives, such an assumption fades away. Halbwachs' social frames of memory still work well. Even the allegedly most prominent site for young sociability (Facebook) reproduces and invigorates previous social networks. Hence, class or political narratives are reproduced or enhanced. This is certainly true for both upper-class and critical leftist groups. None the less, when new evaluative codes and narrative templates emerge, as in the student movement, digital networks act as an 'accelerator' of story circulation.

Eventually, the circulation of memories in school conversations and cultural/ digital media might point to a crucial feature of social memories: variability. There is no

[6] The commemoration of the coup d'état in 2013 – beyond the temporal frame of my interviews – might have modified the narrative scenery through myriad new TV reportage of fictive mini-series. This is a working hypothesis for future research.

clear evidence as to whether or not temporal boundaries are reinforced or broken at those sites. This seems to depend on the extent to which they are linked to family, class, political and (trans)national narrative templates.

7.2.3 Meaningful economy and narrative conjectures

Economic crises constitute part and parcel of the narration of the past in my respondent's life story. Via economic turning points people draw significant temporal boundaries. At the synchronic level, people locate themselves through the crisis of 1981 in Chile, the hyperinflation of 1989 as well the economic meltdown of 2001 in Argentina. Linked to modifications of life-course sequences – from parents being fired to radical impoverishment – economic disturbances match micro and macro events. Economic events are not disentangled from political circumstances, as the crisis of 1981 was under a dictatorship. Still, there were social groups not affected by the political violence or state terrorism that remembered dictatorial contexts only through economic down-up sequences.

At the diachronic level, the meanings attributed to economic events might function as modifiers of temporal boundaries. One mechanism for that is by linking tragedies. The narrative proposed by the Chilean student movement is based on this mechanism. By attempting to link market-oriented education to the bedrock of dictatorship, they were breaking down the temporal boundary (dictatorship-democracy) of the left-centre narrative. Even if there exists a shared understanding among leftist-academia, i.e. that the military government, through the group of Chicago-School economists, conducted the first – enduring – experiment of a neoliberal economy in Chile (Huneeus 2000), the left-centre government coalition was based on the image of a radical breaking between dictatorship and democracy (the triumphal memory of the plebiscite). By 'linking tragedies', the student movement endows a 'new beginning' (dictatorship guidelines) on the story, thereby visualizing a continuity between both periods.

In Argentina, over recent decades, different attempts have been made to link the project of dictatorship to the emergence of neoliberalism in Argentina (see 5.3, and Crenzel's [2007] analysis of the second prologue to the Human Rights Commission). Increasingly after the crisis of 2001 (but already present as a pivotal discourse among the second generation of relatives of victims), the 'nineties' were

constructed as a site where economy and dictatorship met ("from genocide to economic genocide" in the words of Jelin and Sempol 2006:14). This was reinforced under Kirchner's government as a form of narrative hyperbolization (see 5.3, also Novaro 2004). I have shown that Kirchner's narrative consolidates a canonical generation due to the conjecture opened by the crisis, introducing a wave of historical narratives in the public sphere affecting especially those growing up during the 2000s.

Interestingly, Chile has not experienced an economic crisis of that magnitude since 1981. The Asian Crisis of 1997 had an impact, but did not generate the emergence of narratives of breaking (at least among my respondents). It is very likely that people reacted in a more pragmatic way to this first crisis – mostly a crisis of family indebtedness after a decade of high consumption (see Araujo and Martuccelli 2012: 63-67, 'the hangover of the consumption party'). As a result, neither a temporal code of 'before and after' nor new collective promises (a sort of rebirth) have emerged amongst adult cohorts.

7.2.4 Canonization and weakening of state narratives

The processes of *canonization* and *weakening* of state narratives are final mechanisms for controlling Southern Cone temporal boundaries and generational relationships. These diachronic mechanisms are embedded in a long historical sequence of settling accounts with dictatorial periods. Over the last thirty years, Argentinean and Chilean governments have put forward different public narratives in order to come to terms with right-wing dictatorships and state terrorism. In the following, I will show that Argentina has experienced a process of public narrative canonization while Chile, rather conversely, has experienced a weakening of the canonical narrative. This difference might contradict a common assessment that both countries arrived at the same point, the transnational condemnation of crimes against human rights.

From a comparative macro perspective, Elizabeth Jelin has pointed out that memories of state violence in the Southern Cone shifted from "attempts to find closure, to 'solve' and suture past wounds and ruptures" (2010:62) to a new 'hegemonic normality' which "includes attempts to confront the past and to open up

hidden boxes of violence and repression" (2010: 72). As a result, she concludes, "it seems to be 'normal' for a country and a society to distance itself not from the past but from relativization, oblivion and indifference" (ibid.). By the same token, Steve Stern (2010) concludes, in his third volume on the Chilean 'memory question', that "[O]nce one sets Chilean memory reckonings within a transnational framework and a longer timeline, a final major conclusion to this study comes into view: *The sensitization to human rights as a core value in the public culture, irrenunciable regardless of a crisis that once served as justification for atrocity or looking away from it, was a major achievement against the odds, and a reciprocally constituted one when considering world culture"* (2010: 383, italics in original). The transnational consecration of 'national tragedies' and the indisputable reckoning of human rights crimes are seen as being a result of "the continuous and systematic action of the human rights social movement in each country, including their transnational networks" (Jelin 2010: 72), or in broader terms "the frictional synergies of state and civil society actors [in which] the reciprocal interplay of the national and transnational was crucial" (Stern 2010: 373-383).

It might be difficult to contradict this transnational evaluative clause of human rights values and the significance of human rights social movements. For members of the sixties-seventies generation who suffered state violence, the transnational character of their memories has always been evident. The point is to determine the extent to which this 'transnational' character was not exclusively encapsulated by the relatives of victims, ex-prisoners and the community of exiles. Indeed, considering those narrative templates which circulate in 'ordinary' life stories, I suggest that the consecration (and appropriation) of the tragedy differs in both national and generational terms. Let me show why and what diachronic mechanisms are behind these differences according to my respondents' narrative templates.

Two processes of 'tragic' narrativization were visible among those coming of age *after* the most heinous period of state violence (1973-1978). The first process embraces the array of measures taken by the first democratic governments (see 3.6 and 4.7, above). Even though the 'struggle against oblivion' by human rights organizations or victims' families began in the early days of dictatorship, the symbolic power of later state-led initiatives was more crucial for those coming of age during the eighties. In Argentina, a human rights commission as well as the trial of members of the military junta overcame initial attempts to mitigate or justify the

murders and left robust narrative templates and prevailing repertoires of evaluation. Certainly, those templates and moral evaluations were fostered by the mass media, marking a crucial difference from previous attempts at claiming 'truth and justice' (authoritarian regimes control the press as a rule).

In Chile, a human rights commission and the reconciliatory script assumed by the first government had similar weight. The literature on political transitions has rightly called attention to the differences between the Argentine path (the military suffered an important crisis of legitimacy after the military defeat in the Malvinas/ Falklands War) and the Chilean route (a strong political power for the military after an agreement was reached between elites and a subsequent, keenly-contested plebiscite). In the beginning, in Argentina, the military did not have enough power to halt the search for truth and justice. In Chile, military forces together with the right-wing neglected the narrative template offered by the first government and the human rights commission. Nevertheless, Argentina also suffered a military 'uncivil movement' (Payne 2000) in which young officials instigated processes of stopping reaching justice. Continual uprisings and the shocking process of hyperinflation paved the way (as a narrative conjecture) for new authorities that established the 'Chilean' 'reconciliatory script'. This was a very transnational route indeed: while the first government in Chile was fearful of initiating a process of seeking justice, partly due to the 'negative example' of Argentina's uprisings (Collins 2013:64), the Argentine government ultimately reproduced the script put forward by the Chilean authorities: leave the past behind and look towards the future (see 3.6).

The future-oriented narrative had, nevertheless, less symbolic weight in Argentina. The report of the commission and the trial of junta members were intensively followed by a wide audience, leaving behind a strong repertoire of evaluation. In Chile, those first attempts at coming to terms with the crimes – 'the ritual of reconciliation' (Güell and Norbert 2006) – were interrupted, in 1991, by the assassination of one of the most important leaders of the right by a terrorist leftist group. This enforced the idea of leaving the past behind and fostering a process of reconciliation ('avoid resentment'). In turn, in Chile, the future-oriented narrative was invigorated by the promise of a better future: political freedom, material welfare (consumption) and the hope of social mobility via education. State-led initiatives were barely visible during the nineties (4.7).

Henceforth, struggles and conflicts over the difficult past were mainly pursued by human rights organizations (and renewed by a second wave of activists, victims' heirs) during the nineties. State initiatives were restricted to measures of reparation, restricting any form of public remembering. Furthermore, the setting of memory conflicts was increasingly allocated to the more restricted space of the courts. 'Post-transitional justice' was a matter of "private accountability actors and national courts" (Collins 2010:6), yet detached from a broader audience. In a context of old and new amnesties, relatives of victims and lawyers looked for "legal loopholes" (Barahona 2003: 146).

For the age cohort coming of age in the eighties, such a civil society sequence was less prevalent than the state-led initiatives at the very beginning of the transition (for the youngest cohort, this sequence was non-existent as it was not part of their 'childhood memories'). Consequently, those who were politically engaged (or at least on the electoral register), and enthusiastic about the process of truth and justice, recounted a gradual feeling of detachment and disillusion in the middle of the nineties. An ironic and distant stance thus increasingly dominates as a narrative mode in both countries. A striking similarity between the Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile respondents when reporting those years suggests the existence of a common (transnational) template and a shared 'structure of feeling': detachment and irony.

The second process of state initiatives started around 2003 (see 5.5. and 6.3, above). From this date onwards – in contrast to the appraisal of similar transnational developments in Chile and Argentina – I observe opposing routes. On the one hand, Argentina is characterised by a process of narrative canonization which brings back the difficult past by means of state-driven commemoration. On the other hand, the transitional future-oriented narrative in Chile suffered a gradual decease. Instead of the emergence of a new one, at the state-symbolic level, the cycle of student protests led to a narrative breaking (see 6.6, the romantic plot).

In Argentina, after the economic crisis of 2001, Néstor Kirchner's new government encouraged a deep shift in the public memorization of the last dictatorship. Adopting the discourse of some human rights organizations (esp. 'mothers' and 'children' of the *desaparecidos*), he presented himself as a member of the 'decimated' and 'heroic' seventies generation (i.e. martyrs), canonizing the past as both a tragedy (and

thereof the necessity of remembering and achieving justice) and a reference to youth engagement (promoting the desire for social justice). Certainly, the nullification of amnesty laws and the modification of the Supreme Court brought about a new setting in which myriad trials have been conducted and memory initiatives initiated. Yet, this crucial aspect of transitional justice comes after the symbolical turning point produced by Kichner's double canonization (of the tragedy and of the heroic example for present times). After Kirchner's canonization of the past, young stories reported a boost in family-table dialogues about the past, multiple activities organized by student organizations and defining commemorations (in particular, the 30th anniversary of the coup d'état in 2006).

Moreover, under the governments of Néstor Kirchner and his wife Cristina Fernández, a second 'recovery of the past' took place. The 'recovery of Peronism' as a triumphant memory polarized society, burdening especially the young generational site. The re-emergence of youth Peronist organizations in schools and universities, the antagonist frame of the farm crisis in 2008 (calling for a clear taking of sides) and Néstor Kircher's death in 2010 (mourning him in *Plaza de Mayo*) resulted in contentious positions in this period (see 5.6, above). The recovery of memories of both the dictatorship and classical Peronism creates linkages with the past, thereby controlling the temporal boundaries of public narratives. The past returned as a source of legitimation and a horizon of expectations. Nostalgic and comic (3.8) as well as cyclical (5.7) modes of emplotment must be viewed as reactions to the recovery of these memories (see below).

In Chile, such a symbolic canonization or 'past recovery' has barely taken place. By contrast, different historical pasts remain polluted (as in the case of Popular Unity) or faded away as points of historical reference (the long history of the first half of the 20th century). As I have examined (4.1), September 11, 1973 in Chile was narrated by older cohorts as an absolute before and after, traumatic for their parents and what came later. Whereas the dictatorship has been increasingly established as a difficult and tragic past, Allende's government (1970–1973) remains a site of contentious and dividing memories. Allende's Popular Unity is described as either a democratic and socialist government (sacred) or a communist government (polluted). Even though many young people have purified and mythologized Allende, his government remains burdened, and the food lines (queues) are still a generational argument of

(right-wing) older cohorts: 'you did not live the queues, you cannot understand the past' (6.1).

In spite of these circumstances, the dominant 'future-oriented narrative' (leave the past behind and look towards the future) gradually decayed. After the revival of antagonist positions due to Pinochet's detention in London, state-led initiatives by Lagos' government shifted the focus from 'leaving the past behind' to 'learning from the past'. The truth commission on torture and imprisonment inaugurated in 2003, as well as the Museum of Memory and Human Rights, stems from this institutional shift. At the same time, the thirtieth commemoration of the coup d'état provoked a massive wave of media reportage. This ritual of mourning enhanced the disapproval of human rights crimes (Rios 2003, Wilde 2013, Winn 2007), and purified Allende's figure. Still, Lagos's proposal ('there is no tomorrow without yesterday') remains rooted in the idea of reconciliation and national unity.

The future-oriented narrative was finally weakened by the student movement. The promise of welfare and social mobility through education was contrasted with personal and family crises provoked by a market-driven education system (in particular, the narrative surrounding debt as a system failure). Henceforth, critical stances towards 'old' narrative boundaries (democracy-dictatorship) and 'reflective nostalgias' (Boym 2002), longing for a period of 'public education', were stimulated by a large array of cultural revivals in street demonstrations. The cycle of protests was the site of the emergence of a 'romantic plot' conveying a 'utopian past' as well as a new generational division: we, the generation 'without fear any longer' awoke to break both the communicative silence (leave the past behind) and the idea of education as a promise of mobility (look towards the future).

Let me summarize what I have examined so far. In the first section, I concentrated on those factors which explain the circumstances in which people connect their biographies to collective events via life stories. I highlighted the role of emotional bonds generated by sharing memories of events occurring during youth. Next, I underlined how the search for coherence changes the meaning of these events in order to make cohere one's biographical past and present. I subsequently stressed the role of narrative templates in bestowing plausibility on blurred recollections. I finished by presenting some blocking mechanisms embedded in lower- and upper-class memories. In this second section, I have observed how historical pasts inform

their stories, delimiting *us* from *them* via temporal repertoires. Firstly, family was a fundamental setting to delimit what is reportable and what is not. Secondly, I have attempted to frame the role of narratives in schools, peer conversations and the media when enhancing or breaking public templates. Then, I moved to the narrative conjectures opened up by economical events, and how new narratives linked past and present constellations, breaking old symbolic boundaries. I have finished this section by showing the role played by state-led initiatives and public discussions of the past when canonizing memories of the right-wing dictatorships in Argentina and Chile. Let now finish the chapter by showing how both dimensions of generational building are connected.

7.3 Modes of emplotment as linking mechanisms

Modes of emplotment are the linking mechanism for understanding narratives of generational continuity and breaking. In the following, I make a comparison of the five 'modes of emplotment' which I have already introduced at the end of every chapter. Modes of emplotment – also referred to as plot-lines or cultural genres – offer recipes for structuring experiences. As socially available cultural models, they provide templates for organizing those experiences as temporal sequences.

I regarded these modes of emplotment as crucial tools in order to understand how meaning is both endowed on collective – biographically experienced – events (at the synchronic level) and connected to projects of boundary control (at the diachronic level). Put differently, I show via these five plots how the life stories of people living after the dictatorship are framed (i.e. plotted) vis-à-vis public and contesting images of historical pasts.

Still, generational coherence via plots points not only to the arrangements for temporal sequences (past – present – future) but also to the repertoires of evaluation contained in these sequences. This is the key component of narrative analysis when illuminating symbolic boundaries between 'past' and 'present' (our time, their time). Modern cultural sociology claims (see Alexander and Smith 1993, Giesen 1999, Smith 2005) that evaluative clauses embedded in temporal sequences can be understood in terms of cultural codes. As I have argued above (1.4 – 2.2), temporal, spatial and moral binary codes (Koselleck 2000) form part of the latter.

In line with this, Alexander (2003: 25) has proposed that "if one takes a structuralist approach to narrative, textual forms are seen as interwoven repertoires of characters, plot lines, and moral evaluations whose relationships can be specified in terms of formal models". In the following, I specify these modes of emplotment and their embedded cultural codes (Table 5), thereby explaining how and why Southern Cone life stories are entangled in collective and generational repertoires of evaluation.

Table 5
Modes of emplotment and codes

Plot	Past	Present	Future	Code
Nostalgic	Mythical (Golden Age)	(Moral) Chaos	Tragic	Respect/ Disrespect
Comedy	Ironic tragedy	Reintegration	Positive	Credibility/Falsehood
Consoling	Fearful tragedy	Adaptation	Ambivalent	Expectation/Reality
Cyclical	Undisputable tragedy	Division	Repetitive	Sacred/ Polluted
Romantic	Their tragedy	Contesting	Utopic (Golden Age)	Good (Us)/ Bad (Them)

7.3.1 Nostalgic plot: Reaction against a new canonical narrative

As an ideal type of narrative of decline, the nostalgic mode of emplotment endows the past with a positive feature, while present and future are viewed as being in decay, as a history of decadence (*Verfallsgeschichte*). As Zerubavel states, "this unmistakably backward-clinging historical stance typically includes an inevitably tragic vision of some glorious past, that, unfortunately, is lost forever" (2003: 16).

Here, primordial codes (Giesen 1999: 32) create strong temporal boundaries. The 'old time of social respect for order' is acutely confronted by the present (moral) chaos in schools, streets and speech (manners). The more the present time is polluted by evil forces, the more the past is mythologized. The magnitude of 'evil forces' anticipates a future tragedy.

A nostalgic mode of emplotment was embedded in adult cohorts' stories, particularly in Buenos Aires (3.8). The evil force par excellence is the feeling of street insecurity (3.7). Violence, the drugs market, robberies, kidnappings and the loss of a quiet

neighbourhood life are the most salient topics. For them, the symbolic pollution is augmented among the younger generation (but not their own heirs).

Two contrasting experiences nourish such a plot-line and codification. On the one hand, those living in poor neighbourhoods suffer from the incapacity of the state to offer security. Chains of violence in homes and streets are vividly reported (especially as gendered memories of violence; see Auyero and Berti 2013). The violence is historically allocated to the nineties (after the hyperinflation) or after the economic crisis of 2001 (i.e. a different violence in comparison to previous state terrorism). Previously, blurred memories of quiet childhoods offered some sort of good times (although fathers' violence was always present). Still, this is never a generational story or some sort of historical narrative, it is exclusively a moral story of societal disintegration. As a result, fear of certain territory (a polluted space), fear of the night (polluted time), and fear of violent thieves, bands and lost youths (polluted social groups) drew a widespread cognitive map. Family-table conversations, some networks of neighbours and particularly the mass media circulate this mode of emplotment.

The middle-upper and upper classes in Buenos Aires show the same moral codification. Some spaces, times and social groups ('poor' delinquents) stand for the risky outer world. Private residences (the Countries) and the security industry help to maintain 'pure' inner boundaries. Instead of a particular experience of risky environments, 'distant' heinous crimes echo through family-table conversations and in the mass media. Around the family table, the image of a quiet childhood circulates as a temporal boundary. The emergence of street insecurity is recounted here as a generational experience ('we saw how the streets became dangerous'). This experience is regarded as more important than their 'formative years', and matches their life courses in parenthood.

The weight of the nostalgic plot is framed by symbolic memories as well. Argentina has a great number of myths of decadence (Grimson 2012, Semán and Merensón 2007), although the narrative force of this nostalgic plot responded to Kirchner's narrative. By canonizing the period of dictatorship as a tragedy, President Kirchner blocks any representation of the last dictatorship as a time of 'good' social order. As a result, upper-middle class stories cannot easily embed their childhoods as 'quiet good times'.

The past must rather be idealized or located in a mythical golden age of Argentina's history. Moreover, when the narrative recovery of Personism as a triumphant memory was put forward by the Kirchners (either the first Peronist government in the forties or the seventies heroic generation), the middle-upper class reinforced a remote past time, prior to the emergence of Peronism, as a time of 'national prosperity'. Given its everlasting anti-Peronist orientation, the middle classes thereby demarcated themselves. In this sense, these groups react to narrative change through 'restorative nostalgia', they "engage in the anti-modern myth-making of history by means of a return to national symbols and myths" (Boym 2002: 41).[7]

7.3.2 Comical plot: Reintegration encouraged by new canonical narratives

A comical mode of emplotment presents a more complex narrative structure. Its plot line resembles, in Zerubavel terms, a "Cinderella-like fall-and-rise narrative, in which a sharp descent is suddenly reversed, thereby changing to a major ascent" (2003: 18-19). The attribute of a 'happy ending', as the reintegration of society, promises a better future for heirs and successors. In this classical sense, the comic plot differs from the modern meaning bestowed on it, of laughing or hilarious subjects. Instead, comedy involves a striking movement "from one kind of society to another (…) at the beginning of the play the obstructing characters are in charge of the play's society, and the audience recognizes that they are usurpers. At the end of the play the device in the plot that brings hero and heroine together causes a new society" (Frye 1957: 163).

A considerable extent of comical plots is about uncovering *usurpers* ('false helpers' or 'blocking characters') who oppose the protagonist's wishes. As Jacobs and Sobieraj note, "a central component of many comic stories, the blocking character, is intimately connected with the theme of the absurd, and typically receives a significant amount of ridicule in the movement toward comedy's telos, the

[7] The nostalgic mode of emplotment does not exhaust different 'modalities of nostalgia' (Pickering and Keightley 2006). Chilean lower-class respondents longed for a period of solidarity during dictatorship, as a nostalgic structure of feeling (4.7). Young Argentine left-Peronist organizations develop a 'radical nostalgia' (Bonnett 2010) of youth 'seventies' engagement (5.6). In the Chilean student movement, cultural performances and claims for the 'recovery of public education' produce (6.5) a 'reflective nostalgia' (Boym 2002). Therefore, the nostalgic plot is better encapsulated here as one particular form of decline narrative.

reintegration of society" (2007: 7). As such, I suggest that a binary code of credibility/ falsehood prevails in comedy plots as the audience understand who was responsible in the past (or attempting to be in the present) to block the protagonist's wishes. In comedy, characters are mainly judged by their *credibility*, with some ideal of progress at the end of the plot-line.

The comic mode of emplotment also crystallizes around the old Buenos Aires cohort (3.7). However, Buenos Aires middle-class stories differ from lower or upper-middle class stories. *Their* past (referring to their formative years here) contains three movements: an initial difficult past (*the fall*) marked by childhood memories of the last dictatorship and acknowledgement of clandestine terror, as well as the breaking moment of the Malvinas/Falklands War (3.2-3.4). Afterwards, there is a moment of illusion and ascent (*the rise*), in which the recovery of democracy is recounted by civil engagement, as well as enrolment in political youth organizations (3.5). However, the final moment is represented as a failed turning point (*a new fall*). The promise of true democracy and processes of justice are blocked by false heroes (signalled in 'the pact of olives' by Menem and Alfonsín). In these life stories, youth is remembered as a time of political engagement, supporting democracy (3.6). They do not personally appropriate the authoritarian period as 'their time' (it belongs to older generations), yet they appropriated later disenchantment with blocking processes of coming to terms with dictatorship. Consequently, irony and disappointment function as an evaluative generational clause ('we were betrayed').

A new turning point (the final, comical *narrative's ascent*) emerges through Kirchner's canonical narrative. By recognizing in Kirchner's symbolic memory a worthy attempt to set the account straight with the dictatorship, as well as a new wave of politicization, they left behind a period of critical distance and irony. Some of them reinserted themselves in networks of civil organizations and fostered political participation for their growing children. Tellingly, the new canonical narrative matches the repertoires of evaluation consolidated during their formative years: political participation and 'truth and justice' as democratic values. Hence, they can recognize credibility and falsehood according to these evaluative criteria. Old attempts at neglecting processes of truth and justice – or undervaluing political participation - might be identified as blocking protagonists' desires.

Even if critical and ironical distance remains key to some of them, youth politicization confirms a happy end for the entire group. Interestingly, the 'we-generation' identification is weakened by a narrative of inter-generational continuity: parents' political engagement during the fifties is linked with their own civil engagement during the eighties, which is finally transmitted to new youth civil participation. Future events (as new disappointments) can unleash a return to irony.

7.3.3. Consoling plot: Weakening of the canonical narrative

The consoling plot is a post-apocalyptical mode of emplotment. Frank Kermode called it the "disconfirmation of literal predictions" (2000 [1961]: 9). It contains the double realization that an imminent tragic final is not coming, nor will the promise of salvation soon be realised. It is indeed an adaptation of expectations after the failure of a collective promise. The future is revealed to be ambiguous, lacking 'great expectations'.

The code informing of a consoling plot is all about the management of these expectations. Pragmatism and realism keep at bay the rise of improbable futures as well as the feeling of some form of inexpugnably fatalism. By focusing on 'reality' – what is controlled by people themselves – people are prevented from being seduced by 'false promises'. What offers consolation are merely those aspects restricted to present, private achievements.

The consoling plot is the most adequate figure to grasp the adult groups' stories in Chile (4.9). The illusion and rise of great expectations were generated by the transition from dictatorship to democracy (4.6). After seventeen years under a dictatorial regime – their entire childhood and adolescence – the feeling of experiencing a historical break was acutely evoked as a before and after. The 'joy is coming' – the slogan of the campaign against continuity of the military regime – fostered a sense of a radical turning point. Yet, similar to Argentina's adult cohort, a gradual experience of disappointment and disenchantment surrounded the later period. The present time (from the middle of the nineties onwards) is narrated as a time of resignation, consumption and individualism (4.7).

Why did nostalgic or comic templates not emerge here as they did in the Argentine case? Nostalgic feelings are indeed visible vis-à-vis the period of struggle against the

dictatorship – in particular by low-class respondents who experienced the rise and fall of powerful networks of solidarity. Even an aesthetic and iconic nostalgia (Bartmanski 2011) evolved in the course of mass media programmes and musical cultures (what I called 'cachaphonic memories' in 4.4). Still, there is no 'mythical golden age' or fatalistic future endowed by these nostalgic narratives. Furthermore, the increase in violent repression during the years of protest between 1983 and 1986 made feelings of fear more dominant than those of nostalgia. The (later) awareness of state terrorism confirmed the image of fearful tragedy. Even for right-wing families – old adherents of Pinochet's regime – the dictatorship steadily disappeared as a period of 'salvation and order' (at least among this cohort, in their forties).

Nor does a comic mode of emplotment appear as there is no collective promise present. There is no narrative reintegration or happy ending. Furthermore, the critical distance might have never been so strong. The initial democratic promise of a better future ('joy is coming') was consolidated via adaptation to the consumer market (esp. via credit and debt), and was never interrupted dramatically as in the Argentine crisis of 2001. Whether or not the student cycle of protests broke the promise of education providing social mobility (the hope for their heirs), the weakening of the future-oriented narrative was not replaced by the consolidation of a new canonical narrative of progress. Instead, the adult group narrowed down their horizons of expectation so that present achievements, such as family or job security, matter more than new alleged promises of social change.

7.3.4: Cyclical plot: Rituals of mourning and dividing futures

A cyclical mode of emplotment is characterised by the active recovery of different pasts to frame present circumstances, at once modifying meanings linked to these historical pasts. A cyclical plot projects two futures: either a positive epic of inter-generational continuity ('the epic of return'), or a pessimistic stance over the repetition of past nightmares ('the tradition of all dead generations').

The active recovery of the past takes place in the sphere of symbolic memories, in particular through collective rituals. Through rituals, different times, spaces and characters are purified while other historical figures become polluted. In contemporary 'tragic' temporality, 'rituals of mourning' dominate by consolidating

sacred elements. The revival of nationalistic commemorative acts is also entangled in this cyclical plot.

The cyclical plot is the narrative mechanism which links young Argentine life stories (5.7). Firstly, the crisis of 2001 was experienced as a period of 'liminal uncertainty' (to draw on Turner's [1995] ritualistic terms), leaving behind 'polluted times' (the nineties) and opening up a period of economic recovery (5.3). The crisis itself affects biographical memories, framing the current inflation turmoil and connecting to parents' experiences (the hyperinflation of 1989). Afterwards, Kirchners' symbolic turn brought back a wave of memories by sacralising victims of state terrorism and elevating his own generation to the status of 'martyrs' (5.5). Beyond path-breaking measures, e.g. the recovery of the main centre of torture (ESMA), the derogation of amnesty laws and explicit support to facilitate hundreds of trials, the dictatorial past remerges in family conversations as well as the necessity of remembering in school initiatives. The consolidation of this form of 'remembering together' (Eder 2005) took place in a massive ritual of mourning when commemorating thirty years of the beginning of the coup d'état in 2006.

A second cyclical constellation was the recovery of the Peronist memory as a triumphant and polarizing past (5.6). The triumphant aspect started at the level of student councils in high schools and universities, when leftist Peronist student organizations re-emerged. A group of past left-Peronist figures act as sacred emblems of civil engagement and social change (Cámpora, William Coke and, in particular, Evita). The polarizing aspect was clearer in the case of the 'farm crisis' in 2008, when old divisions between Peronists and anti-Peronists framed the political struggle again. Finally, Néstor Kirchner's death conveys an ultimate sense of collective bonding when sharing in his final ritual of mourning.

The anti-Peronist position (in the case of the right-wing, upper-middle class) was revived in family table conversations, recalling Perón's first government as a fascist or authoritarian time. This produces an inter-generational discourse of decadence, and tragic futures (the eternal return of national mistakes). Peronist governments would be polluted as clientelistic networks, manipulating the people and causing a decline in the economy (the ghost of a new crisis). Conversely, those who engaged in civil organizations narrated the return of youth's political engagement as a continuity with the old precursors of social change. The "epic of return" (Frye 1957:

317) also narrowed down feelings of generational identification and instead stimulated the figure of inter-generational legacies and heritages which are worth reviving.

7.3.5 Romantic plot: Utopian longings and the emergence of new generations

As an inverted case of the mode of decline, romantic modes of emplotment featured a theme of ascent. Even if 'romantic sagas' contain rises and falls – the struggle of a hero or heroine – "its overall trajectory is clear enough and unidirectionally progressive" (Knutsen 2002: 121). The image of the future in romantic plots is, however, not entirely evolutionary. As Jameson maintains, romantic emplotment is a "re-expression of utopian longings" (1981: 91) whereby a mythical golden age is recovered to illuminate near futures. In contrast to nostalgic emplotments, the mythical golden age is not lost forever but allocated to the present future.

The romantic plot embeds moral codes which divide society between powerful villains who cause repulsion and heroes who awake identification. In generational terms, villains are related to polluted times, whereas heroes stand for novelty and youth. A sense of generational 'we' emerges via feelings of disruption and breaking. By appropriating these codes, the life stories embedded in romantic plot lines develop a 'story of becoming' (Bearman and Stovel 2000). Ultimately, the codification of the civil sphere as a moral binary code (Alexander 1992) might coalesce with the romantic plot (Jacobs and Smith 1997: 68).

In life stories recounting as defining the Chilean cycle of student protests from 2006 to 2011, these entailed a romance (6.6). Two temporal boundaries are at stake in such stories. On the one hand, the historical location of being born after the dictatorship endowed them with symbolic innocence (6.1). In other terms, since military regimes polluted older generations (traumatized by violence or riddled with fear), they can generationally sustain a historical novelty ('without fear any longer'). On the other hand, the temporal boundary between dictatorship and democracy is confronted by an image of continuity through market-oriented policies (in education, health, pensions). The future-oriented narrative is weakened when the promise of a better future (social mobility) is put in doubt by pointing to a poor educational system and the rise in family debt.

The utopian future of this romantic plot contains a subtle 'reflective nostalgia' (Boym 2002). A mythical past of public education is revived as a horizon of expectation. Furthermore, different cultural artefacts, such as songs and emblems, recover an aesthetic of left-wing protests in the sixties (6.5). By reviving the tonalities of previous decades, musicians stimulate generational bridges between past and present performances. Allende, as a mythical leader (a widespread assumption after the thirtieth commemoration of the coup in 2003) and a certain sacralization of victims through childhood figures enhance this recovery. Still, a generational 'we' feeling is stronger than some inter-generationality identification as, firstly, older Chilean canonical generations were defined in terms of one's subscription to political parties. Conversely, political parties as networks of civil engagement were absent in the young life stories (left of centre politicians were regarded as false heroes). Ultimately, the dictatorship remains a distant past (their tragedy). I suggest that the role occupied by family and politically communicative silence blocks some form of appropriation. Moreover, as I noted in Chapter Six, the cycle of protests consolidates the image of a romantic hero against villains and false heroes.

Is here observed the emergence of a new canonical generation? It is not yet clear. The consolidation of repertoires of evaluation and narrative sequences takes time. The very idea of 'historical generations' (Fietze 2009) is a posteriori idealization of romantic plots (breaking and rupture with cultural patterns). Future events can unleash a necessary reflexive distance from romantic narratives. Jacobs and Smith also observe the risk of authoritarian patterns in romance when a particular group encloses 'the good side'. Finally, I have to remember that my respondents insisted on an image of carnival to describe the student protests. It might be – as Bakhtin observed – that protests were indeed "the feast of becoming, change and renewal", but also that they stood only for "temporary liberation(s)" (1986 [1965]: 10). Old canonical narratives can return as socially meaningful - and what was felt as fervour might just remain a nostalgic feeling for formative and critical years. All of these plots shift over time. Further research should make clearer the rhythms of the (narrative) cycle of generations.

Summary

The three dimensions of generational building discussed above offer the basis for examining structures of meaning embedded in generational stories. They are the building blocks for a cultural understanding of generations. At the synchronic level, the role of emotional bonds and coherence is visible when connecting and sequencing life courses with public events. At the level of the diachronic dimension, projects of identity control via family, the mass media and public narratives explain how historical pasts are recovered, silenced or polluted. By canonizing or weakening narrative templates, political elites and social movements alter the temporal boundaries (what came before and what follows after). Finally, modes of emplotment operate as linking mechanisms, bestowing coherence on temporal sequences and offering repertoires in order to evaluate past and present. The four generational sites examined above are thus characterised by the particular emotions of their times, cohere through their present repertoires of evaluation and react to narrative processes of canonization and projects of identity control. Let me now offer a final conclusion to this thesis by answering my initial research questions.

Conclusion: whose generational memories?

While the previous chapter offered an analytical summary of this doctoral research, I want to conclude this thesis by briefly returning to the three research questions posed in the introduction.

- When and how do 'ordinary' people who grew up during the 1980s and 2000s in Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile narrate and connect their biographies to collective experiences?

The intersection between life courses and macro events is initially informed by events which occurred in the interviewees' formative, critical years (that is, when they were about 9-25 years old). In contrast to fuzzy memories of collective events experienced in childhood, people feel generationally bonded by what are perceived to be key memories of their youth. Thus, events experienced outside the family, amongst networks of peers in school and public spaces, remain the strongest source of generational narratives.

Those events are narrated collectively as turning points by coevals and broader mnemonic communities. This was shown in the Argentinean cases regarding the Malvinas/Falklands War and democratization (Chapter Three) as well as the economic crisis of 2001 and the farm crisis in 2008 (Chapter Five). This was the case in Chile, too, where people narrated as critical public events the protests against the dictatorship and the plebiscite in 1988 (Chapter Four) as well as the cycle of student protests (Chapter Six).

Depending on 'age and also circumstances', the narrative voice varies. In early adolescence, the passive voice predominates. These are events reported within primary school and family spaces, followed mainly via the media (listening to the radio, watching television and so on). Later, some experiences are narrated as if one had been an active participant in the story. This performative character enhances the authority of those recollections, and provides a powerful basis for a generational argument ('I was there, you were not; you cannot understand'). In all these cases, I argue that neither a shared habitus nor a generational consciousness is an appropriate focus of analysis, rather it is the emotional bond of being affected by those social convulsions. Disillusion, fear, uncertainty, fervour etc. are the basic

material of generational stories. Social movements, in particular, offered the most fitting setting for claiming 'we feelings' associated with 'triumphal' stories of 'doing history'.

This thesis concerning formative years should, however, be reviewed in the light of other narrative forms. Childhood memories of collective events – even blurry recollections – gain coherence from narratives templates. These templates are crucial to connect longer narrative sequences, from childhood to adulthood, thereby endowing coherence on life stories. Processes of meaning attribution play a decisive role when linking narrative life trajectories with macro sequences. Moreover, even evaluations which emerged from youthful experiences and have, until today, established strong codes might be modified by future events. Generational stories never entail frozen repertoires of evaluation. Since these stories are informed by narrative structures which evolve over time, they are highly dynamic.

Ultimately, to connect biographies and macro stories narratively might be hampered by strategies of social closure (upper-class memories) and experiences of violence and exclusion (lower-class memories). Other mnemonic communities (e.g. the relatives of victims) may also attribute greater relevance to older traumatic circumstances as feelings of belonging (See Jara 2016). Nevertheless, I argue, at least among the 'ordinary' citizens of Chile and Argentina, that the so-called 'inter-generational transmission of trauma' does not affect broader groups – in contrast to what is suggested by research addressing 'traumatized' societies.

- How do narratives of the past (in particular of right-wing dictatorships) foster, recover or hamper 'temporal boundaries'?

I have argued that inter-generational memories are regulated by projects of controlling identity boundaries. This is a crucial feature of narrativity as stories circulating in social sites define in/out differences. Following this rationale, family loyalty is the first mechanism to consider when controlling identities. Narratives of the past are hampered or recovered depending on the opportunity/risk entailed for family groups. Particularly in Chile, communicative silence within families plays an important role in transmitting the past. The generational argument is also a form of communicative silence ('you cannot understand'), thereby closing and blocking

dialogue. School and media were important memory supports for fostering shared templates – albeit politically, class or state oriented.

The drawing of temporal boundaries at the macro level depends on canonical narratives. In Argentina, the consolidation of a new canonical narrative shifted the image of the past. The past was canonized through the images of sacral-heroic victims. Such canonization was visible in life stories at the level of family, school and peer conversations. Néstor Kichner's performance opened the way for both indisputable memories of human-rights crimes (e.g. genocide) as well as a polarized understanding of the country's civic culture.

In Chile, the weakening of the canonical narrative ('leave the past behind and look towards the future') was the outcome of commemorations of and disputes about the past (i.e. the impossibility of leaving the past behind) as well as of the student social movement which discussed the promise of a better future (i.e. social mobility via education), thereby breaking the temporal boundary between dictatorship and democracy.

The canonization carried out by the Kirchners would have not been possible without both the narrative conjecture opened up by the crisis in the economy of 2001 and the effectiveness of the Kirchners' performance. That is, without the economic crisis, it might not have been possible to narrate a polluted link between neoliberalism and dictatorship. On the other hand, the impact of the Kirchners intervention in the public sphere is seen as a successful rooting of the state discourse in civil rights positions (the past is synonymous with dictatorship and neoliberalism, the present must be about remembering and social justice). Also, the revival of classical Peronism as a triumphant memory by Kirchner's government bestows on it symbolical effectiveness.

Chile did not experience an economic crisis of the same magnitude. Concerning some economic convulsions (e.g. the Asian Crisis), the broader population as well as elites reacted pragmatically, i.e. without 'symbolic' convulsions. Political elites also preferred to maintain a progressive narrative and a reconciliatory script instead of creating a new canonical narrative. Via this progressive narrative some historical pasts (e.g. Allende's government as a time of scarcity) remain polluted. The breaking narrative of the student movement thus offered a sort of 'reflective nostalgia' when recovering the time of public education as utopia.

- Why and how are life stories entangled in generational narratives of continuity/breaking?

Given that this is the most general question of the thesis, there is no simple answer. Yet, it is clear that narrative structures (plots) offer the most adequate answer in order to explain this 'how'. People structure their biographical experiences via these socially available narrative models which make their stories coherent. Narrative plots bestow coherence via temporal sequences (past-present-future) and convey repertoires of evaluation. These repertories embed differences between the past and the present in terms of temporal and symbolic boundaries (our time/their time).

Every mode of emplotment observed entails particular experiences of the respondents' *present time* (street insecurity in nostalgic modes of emplotment or a sense of societal rebirth after an ironic detachment in comic modes) and conveys an *image of the past* (e.g. the consoling plot promotes fearful tragedy, while for romantic plotting, the past is 'their' tragedy which might not stop 'us' overcoming societal pitfalls).

Yet, why do narratives of generational continuity or breaking emerge in the course of Argentinean and Chilean processes, respectively, of youth politicization? Let me first indicate that narratives of generational continuity predominate in the majority of cases. Nostalgic, comic, consoling and cyclical plots represent different forms of narrate 'continuity'. Whereas nostalgia is essentially a history of moral decadence beyond generations, comic and consoling plots enable reintegration after adapting to canonical narratives. The cyclical mode of emplotment repeats old divisions as either the '*Auftrag*' of social justice (pro-Kirchnerism) or the claim that, currently, past mistakes are repeated. The idea of continuity is also visible when a strong sense of a generational 'we feeling' barely emerges in these modes. (Some) polar divisions are informed by cyclical or comic narratives. The family (as a refuge) as well as the nation are settings of nostalgic emplotment. The consoling plot keeps at bay the use of collective pronouns, as the story finishes with hopes for 'private' consolation only ('eventually, you are on your own').

These modes of emplotment react against or adapt to a canonical narrative. The latter recovers, blocks and fosters certain images of the past. The youth politicization in Argentina is thus a product of the canonization carried out by the Kirchner governments. They initially shifted the public memory of the dictatorship

and subsequently polarized the Argentine public sphere via a Peronist codification (the people vs the elite). Kirchner affected the young generational site via these 'recoveries of the past' and young people thus had to position themselves around these structures of meaning. The 'Auftrag' (to remember and be engaged) was indeed presented to youth in terms of the 'return of militancy' (as an intergenerational chain of activism). Certainly, not everyone living in the same age is affected by these public debates (e.g. lower-class respondents or the globalized upper classes), but these were the most critical public events which stimulated stories and were noted at the level of life stories.

Similarly, not all Chilean young respondents adopted a romantic mode of emplotment. However, the latter was the predominant plotting as the most crucial events remembered were the student protests. Via the romantic codification of the student movement, a narrative of breaking emerges. Instead of a narrative of state support, this movement stands for a classical civil society movement. I have shown that the emergence of this mode of emplotment is due to a weakening of the canonical narrative ('leave the past behind and look towards the future') via commemorations of and public debates about the past in the last decade as well as the fall of the narrative of progress linked to educational promise. All in all, although the canonical narrative was already undermined by processes of public memorialization, the student movements enforced this process of weakening the canonical narrative.

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The narrative approach I adopted in this thesis has been beneficial for demonstrating the match between life stories and macro events, processes of meaning attribution via templates and cultural codes, as well as the entanglement of modes of emplotment. Nevertheless, my research design has some limitations, particularly regarding sample construction.

The recruitment of the sample of interviewees limited a broader understanding of these contexts. It would have been relevant to interview people born in the fifties or sixties as they experienced the coup d'état and the more violent years of political repression in their formative years. Even if there is already an enormous literature about that period, the use of the same methodological device would have provided more accurate comparative results and shown the evolution of these narratives over

time. The same might be the case for people born in Chile or Argentina in the late seventies or early eighties. In particular, those who experienced the crisis of 2001 in Argentina in the middle of their formative years, and who share the generational site with the second generation of victims' children, might have similarly, romantically, plotted their stories as did the young Chilean students observed above (as a civil-society movement opposing state guidelines). In other terms, those who grew up in Argentina during the crisis might have incorporated a sense of breaking. They experienced the emergence of a large number of civil-society organizations at the time of the crisis. My Argentine youngest respondents were too young to have incorporated this sense of breaking (passive observers). This is crucial, as I have never pretended to be essentialist about national narratives (as if Argentina stands for continuity and Chile stands for breaking. In fact, the opposite might be the case in the longue dureé).

Furthermore, my focus on capital provinces (Santiago de Chile and Buenos Aires) restricts my analysis. Regional differences might reveal different life courses and modes of emplotment, according to other socio-economic conditions (e.g. mode of narration in agriculture zones). Moreover, my use of the term 'middle classes' would require further differentiation within these groups, to reveal how some middle-class paths interact at the level of modes of remembering (e.g. when former working-class members from the first generation became public servants in the second one).

Therefore, future research should take a larger sample, yet maintain the comparative context. Some of the most significant results were when comparing the narrative templates circulating in the two countries. This also might also include other countries and their difficult pasts (Peru and Uruguay for example) – as well as future commemorations. The fortieth anniversary of the coup d'état in 2013 in Chile might be compared with the same occasion in Argentina in 2016. In addition, I would emphasize the role of 'memory of economic events'. Memories studies tend to focus on political and national constellations, as my research has done. But, in broad parts of these life stories, critical economic conjectures define how people located themselves in time and shifted the meaning of the past. The establishment of a sub-field of 'memory of economic events' within the vast scope of memory studies would be a fascinating scenario.

A narrative cycle of continuity/breaking could be also a stimulating field for narrative research. For example, over the last year, a wave of claims about 'continuity' amongst elites in Chile has counteracted the breaking narrative fostered by student protests. In Argentina, a future (perhaps current) weakening of the Kirchners' canonical narrative might also provide for innovative solutions or acute circumstances of social crisis, thus fostering new narratives of breaking. Even if this cycle does not follow a mechanistic circuit, the counterbalance between narratives of breaking and continuity could be researched more systematically. I have at least laid a first building block for future research: looking at narrative structures and repertoires of evaluation, and how they shift over time.

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